

Part I

CHAPTER ONE

It didn't occur to me to write a biography of Hillary Malone until after her funeral, when it became clear that the poor attendance at her memorial service was due mostly to the fact that Hillary outlived nearly all of her contemporaries. I am a professional writer and it was not a sense of humility that made me unable to put myself in the role of her biographer. Rather, it was a feeling that I was too close to the subject, too emotional in my evocations, far too hurt by decades of her indifference to me. Two years after her death, Rebecca, a lady with whom I was having a casual and almost entirely sexual relationship, stood one morning looking down at one of my prized pictures of Hillary. It was in a silver frame on the desk in my bedroom, and was the only photograph in the room. Rebecca asked me why I didn't write a book about her. I joined her on the other side of the room and gazed down at the picture, taken by some unknown friend of Hillary's. It showed her sitting at a table in a Montparnasse cafe in 1923 with Hemingway, Hadley, and three unidentified men. A white hat was pulled tightly over her ears and her dress was black. Everyone was smiling except Hillary. She looked directly into the camera with an expression that combined indifference and haughty sexuality.

Rebecca knew a great deal about my relationship with Hillary Malone, having delved deeper and deeper into that part of my past each time she visited my Manhattan brownstone and awoke, invariably earlier than I, to the bright morning sunshine reflected from the steel and glass structure across the street from my house. Rebecca's inquiries were almost a ritual with us, as though the otherwise empty relationship

needed something to fill the time between passionate moments, which themselves had acquired a certain mechanical and predictable quality.

This newest intrusion into my relationship with Hillary Malone was slightly irritating and I didn't respond for awhile, but walked over to the bed, slipped my robe around me, retrieved Rebecca's satin robe from the floor to which it had been kicked the night before, and handed it to her. I didn't answer her question but said I would go downstairs to make coffee. She didn't press me. However little we shared, she had acquired a certain sensitivity to my temperament and knew when not to push.

I answered her question after I showered and had the obligatory cup of morning coffee with her. I told her I had been too close to the subject to write something credible. Then Rebecca surprised me by asking, "You think it would be better to leave the job to some insensitive and pedantic graduate student needing a thesis topic?" She was right, of course. Anyone today writing a biography of Hillary Malone would have nothing objective to research but that side of her life and character which may fairly be described as gaudy. "Only you could do it. Isn't that right?"

"Hmmm. A biography of a woman? I don't know." Rebecca's robe fell open in front a few inches but my glance at her was brief. "Who would read it?"

Rebecca thought a moment. "Two kinds of people, I think. All of those interested in the 'lost generation,' of course. And educated women."

"Like you."

"Sure. Like me."

"You've always asked me questions about Hillary. But not once have I asked you what you think of her."

Rebecca got up, walked to the counter, and brought the coffee pot back to the table. She poured coffee into our cups.

"I'd rather discuss the problems you'd have," she said quietly.

"Are you avoiding the question?"

"Yes and no."

"So tell me the problems."

She put the pot back on the stove, came back to the table, and sat down. "I assume I know the essentials, that such a book would only fill in details about things I already know . . . or could be researched."

"I think that's right."

"Well, then, the lovers of Hemingway and all the others she knew will enjoy it. A perspective on the lives of those people, even if it only confirms facts we already know. It's still new. Everything else about that time is a rehash."

"And the other group? All of the Rebeccas out there?"

"That's a problem," she said, screwing up her lips in thought.

"Why?"

"Because she failed. Because we would want to cheer her past the barriers and feel good about her . . . as we want to feel good about ourselves."

"Hillary's life could not make a woman feel very good."

"Exactly."

"But the road to progress is paved with the crushed bones of those who lived at a time when progress was impossible."

"Sure. But don't you see? It was possible."

“I don’t get you,” I said, looking at my watch. I was interested, but I had an important appointment later that morning.

“Her life was a tragedy that didn’t have to be.” Rebecca grimaced. “I’m not being very clear.”

“Try.”

“All right. You asked what I think of her. I can’t say. I can tell you that if she made those choices today, I’d be mad as hell at her. They wouldn’t be necessary. But how can I judge a woman who wanted all the things Hillary wanted forty years ago in Europe? Since I can’t relate to her in the present, and cannot possibly place myself in the past with her, what happened was simply tragic. It makes me angry.”

“I think I understand that.”

“I’ll take the compliment.” Rebecca raised her cup in a mock toast to herself.

“From what you say, I doubt you modern women would want to read a book about her.”

“It’s 1965. We’re different now. That’s why we’d read it. Hillary validates all we’ve sought, especially in the balance of power between men and women.”

“I don’t know.” I frowned. “It doesn’t sound very promising.” Then I smiled. “But it sure as hell sounds challenging.”

Rebecca smiled. “Oh, you’ll do it. You’ll write her story because it needs to be told, and because you alone know what really happened to her.”

I had something even Rebecca did not know about. I had a hundred letters from and to Hillary Malone in the safe in my study. They described in the richest detail not only her life and the lives of the famous people she knew, but also the very inner mood

of what Gertrude Stein sarcastically called the "lost generation." Could I entrust her correspondence to some amateur or professional biographer and permit him to parse it and extrapolate from it that which only I could put into a rich context? Wasn't Rebecca's challenge one that I had to accept?

It was more than a challenge that made me decide to write about the life of Hillary Malone. Two facts convinced me I was the only man for the job. First was my own relationship with Hillary, which stretched over four decades. More important was my exclusive knowledge of the event which caused Hillary, whose promiscuity was, let us say, ahead of its time, never to love or marry.

My relationship with Hillary was a quite commonplace kind. I loved her for four decades and received no love from her in return. At least not the romantic love I craved. When I met her I was eighteen years old, she twenty-four. Her understandable rejection of my pleas of love became less easy for her when, in my twenties, I continued to express them. After that she assumed, not without justification, that I had gotten stuck on an obsessive and irrational attraction to her and had thereby excluded other, more appropriate women from my life. We spent one night in the same bed, in a barn in France escaping the onrushing madness, but were so exhausted that had she considered intimacy with me, she would have been as incapable of doing anything about it as I was. She wrote to me often, but not regularly. The period between letters bore no resemblance to the frequency of my letters to her and varied between three days and eight months. It continued to the end: I received a short note, in a quavering hand, the day after she died.

Actually, two people knew about the most shattering event in Hillary's life. The

other one died ten years ago. Hillary told me the story on a French train late one evening after I bribed the steward and the cook, as they were cleaning up for the night, to reopen the dining car for us.

In the fall of 1918, Hillary Malone met a boy she liked very much. He was a junior at Brown, she a freshman at Smith. An alumni group at her school sponsored a party to which boys from several nearby men's colleges were invited. Two dozen young women gathered to entertain them in the drawing room of a campus residence on an early October evening, the humid air of an Indian Summer day still trapped in the old Victorian structure by a steady late summer shower.

The young men came in carloads, one group after another running through the rain to the front porch to shed raincoats or retract splattering umbrellas before walking into the warming comfort of the residence hall. Their revelry diminished as they entered and stood among soft lights, listened to mellow tenors from the Victrola on a table in the corner, and stared at the beautiful, pink flushed young women standing around nervously on the other side of the room. The women seemed not to know how to make introductions to men who themselves had no idea how one approached young women redolent with the fever of a liberating existence in the academy far from home.

Todd was the handsomest of the boys hanging together in a corner of the room in a tight knot, each holding a crystal cup of punch. As a group, the boys seemed monolithic in their fear and humility. They looked shyly at the whispering girls on the other side of the expansive room. Except Todd. From the moment he entered the room, he looked straight at Hillary and smiled. Then he joined his friends. He wanted to talk to the girl in the dust blue satin dress, take her out to the middle of the floor and

dance with her, hold her, and whisper out of earshot of any who might make fun of him that she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

They danced together several times but, inexplicably, Todd withdrew his arms from her and stood off to one side. He noticed the whole time, as she danced with the other boys, that Hillary turned her head to catch his eye, to make certain he had not forgotten her. After awhile the rain stopped and one of the chaperones threw open some windows to let into the room the cool, sweet air which blew gently across wet leaves, late summer flowers, and the musky bark of trees, cooling brows and drying the backs of moist necks.

Todd asked Hillary to join him on the porch. She was happy to leave the room and share a moment alone with the handsome young man to whom she felt so attracted. They kissed in the shadows at the end of the long porch, away from lighted windows, and he told her he had not arrived with a carload of whiskey drinking, rowdy boys, but had driven over from Brown in his own car. His parents owned a dozen acres on a lake not twenty miles from there and he had a key to the cabin. There was a dock, a boathouse, and two boats in the boathouse. He invited her to drive there with him. Since it was Friday she could return to the campus late.

Hillary knew she would be in trouble if she accepted Todd's invitation and scorned the strict rules of Smith College. She knew her parents might be called, in which case she would have to abide her father's crushing tone of voice. Other girls had done similar things, had been punished by the dean, withstood the rage of parents, and later gloated in the glow of supposed worldliness. They survived. So would she.

Todd had a bottle in the glove box and she drank freely from it while he drove

until she began to feel sick, the exhilaration of her escape overwhelming her judgment. She rested her head against the soft leather of the car's seat, leaning out the open window and allowing the cold air to rush over her face. Todd finished the bottle. She was not aware that the car weaved back and forth across the center of the dark country road. When they arrived at the lakefront house, she sat up straight in her seat as Todd braked the car to a sudden stop in a spray of gravel. She had slept briefly and felt better.

Todd took her down to the boathouse. They stumbled on the wood steps leading down the steep incline to the lake's edge and climbed awkwardly into a rowboat. Todd pushed off expertly, sending the boat across the black-mirrored water, soft ripples off the bow heard but not seen. Hillary was chilled, and enthralled by the forbidden moment, and so was unaware of Todd's approach as he leaned toward her, dropped the heavy oars in their locks, and framed her head with his outstretched palms before kissing her.

The rest became an etched memory, she told me. They returned to the boathouse and walked up the steps to the cabin. The air inside was damp and clammy. Todd built a small fire in the large stone fireplace. They sat under a blanket on a soft-cushioned sofa and watched the flames, and kissed long, sloppy kisses. Todd told her he loved her while he unhooked the back of her dress and pulled the straps of her camisole off her shivering shoulders and down around her waist, his hot breath against her neck as he whispered pleadingly into her ear. It was over very quickly. She pushed at him frantically and told him to stop, she didn't want him to go too far, but the next moment she felt nearly overcome with a desire to conquer her fear of the sexual act;

she barely regained her composure in time to take control of the situation just as Todd paused in his fervent fondling to pull his pants down below his knees.

She could not control him. Her resolution came too late. He thrust awkwardly and much too hard, nearly tearing her flesh. It hurt badly and she screamed. Todd was oblivious to her pain and the piercing sound in his ear, preoccupied by his need to bring on a release which was then inevitable. When it was over he nearly fell to the floor at the foot of the sofa and lit a cigarette with a shaky hand on an ember which had exploded to the edge of the rug from the unshielded fire. He watched with fear and sadness as Hillary sobbed against a pillow and pulled awkwardly at her dress to straighten it.

He told her he was sorry a dozen times on the drive back to the women's residence. He said many other things. But Hillary did not hear one thing he said to her. Her bleating sobs were borne of a regret for what she had wanted that moment to be, but was not and never would be, an opportunity permanently lost. Hillary was pregnant.

CHAPTER TWO

Randolph Malone was a first generation American who as far back as he could remember was ashamed of his Irish family and his working class origins. As if clairvoyant, his mother insisted on giving him the surname of a Boston brahmin about whom she was reading an article in The Globe when the first pains of labor began. She liked the name Randolph because it seemed so completely American. Her husband James was enraged when he returned from an all night binge with several of his friends from the mill, purportedly in celebration of the birth of his son, and discovered that Sarah had named his son Randolph. "He'll be called 'Randy', Sarah, which rhymes with 'dandy'. Our boy will be the dandy. . ." and his voice trailed off unintelligibly, sotted by whiskey, his accent more pronounced. He kissed Sarah listlessly and went to the drawing room to sleep on the couch. He had not even stolen a glance at the baby which lay in a crib on the far side of his and Sarah's bed. Babies were women's things; when the boy grew older James would have his turn with him.

It was a large family into which Randolph was born. James' four brothers and two of his three brothers-in-law immigrated to America five years before, in the spring of 1870, a generation after their fathers tried unsuccessfully to do so after barely surviving the Potato Famine. The Malone men carefully considered their destination together as a family, and rejected possibly better opportunities in the southern United States because of what they read about the condition of southern America at that time, as well as the prejudices against immigrants, even English speaking ones. James was the last to be convinced that it should be Boston. He had all of the bigotry his family ascribed to him but was completely democratic in his hatred of all whom he called the

"Mediterranean peoples" -- dark skinned, dark haired, they spoke other languages and had strange social habits. Like many immigrants who considered inferior those who came after them, the idea that anyone might discriminate against him, James Malone, was inconceivable.

James was more proud of his Irish heritage than anyone in the family and he adapted to the rootless American culture less easily than the others. He was therefore deeply and sincerely offended by his wife's effort to pervert his genealogy with a name like Randolph. The boy grew up in a large and noisy family, aware that his father carried a grudge against him for the irrational reason that he had a certain name. The grudge turned into resentment because James could feel each day Sarah's movement toward the son as the center of her life. The resulting estrangement from his father might have disturbed a child eager to fit into the fabric of family and immigrant society, but from an early age Randolph was quietly confident that he was different, and better, than all of his uncles and cousins, an attitude of superiority which extended to his father.

When Randolph was three, Sarah delivered a second child, a stillborn girl. Her doctor warned her to have no more children. She asked him to arrange it surgically but he refused, thereby casting Sarah and James upon the shoals of celibacy. Forced by religion and cultural mores to abstain from conjugal privilege, and at the same time prohibited from terminating their increasingly painful marriage, James began visiting the saloons with greater regularity and the nights away from home began to stretch to daybreak and beyond. Rather than becoming crushed or cowed by his mother's tears and his father's brutish treatment, Randolph grew stoic and strong-willed. As a teenager, the only joy or comfort he was capable of giving his mother was his

performance in school, and he freely shared those successes with her. But through the years of his growing up, when he heard her sobbing in the kitchen, or bleating with loneliness in her room in the evening, he fought the urge to go to her to give her comfort and by the time he was fifteen there was no urge at all.

The Malones lived a nearly middle class existence and Randolph could not understand where the money came from. His father worked in a paper mill most of those years, but drifted in and out of unemployment, and yet there was always an adequate meal, decent if not fine clothes to wear, and tuition for the private catholic school Randolph attended which, though not the calibre of the private schools of the brahmins, clearly surpassed the quality of the local public schools. Randolph learned later that the extended Irish family he so much abhorred provided his mother with a regular subsidy which supplemented, and at times replaced entirely, that portion of James' pay not used up on whiskey or the inevitable overhead of entertaining women.

Randolph's mother died the day after his sixteenth birthday. He walked home from school and stopped as usual to buy the evening newspaper which Sarah read front to back each night after dinner. He found a somewhat battered, black lacquered carriage, drawn by two black horses with funereal wreaths around their necks, standing in front of his house. He was greeted inside the door by his Uncle Mickey, who drew him away from the drawing room to make the hushed revelation that his mother had had a seizure of some kind and fallen down the stairs, breaking her back. Uncle Mickey led Randolph into the drawing room where all of his uncles and aunts, and a few of the younger cousins, stood staring at him as he crossed the threshold. His mother had not yet been taken to the funeral home, the hearse in front having arrived shortly before

Randolph, and her body lay stretched on a wide parsons table behind the sofa at the far end of the room. Her arms were crossed on her bosom, her eyes were closed, and to Randolph she appeared to be sleeping. She did not have the gray pallor he expected. Anticipating an onrush of tears, Uncle Mickey, whose arm had been resting gently on Randolph's shoulders, tightened his grip and hugged his nephew. Randolph pulled free of him without hiding his irritation and walked through the parting crowd of relatives up to the table where his mother lay. Although he felt grief, the emotion which dominated his consciousness was an overwhelming sense of freedom. He would not have to worry about her any more, he thought, aware for the first time just how much he had worried. His shell had not completely hardened. But he would not have to stay there anymore. In another four weeks, when the school year was finished, he would leave that house, that neighborhood, that constricting circle of uncles, aunts, cousins, and second cousins. His mother had given him the freedom to leave it all behind. He didn't give his father a single thought.

James appeared later that afternoon, when Randolph was in his room pretending to sleep -- if he slept he would be left alone. He heard his father in the hallway outside his bedroom door and the frantic whispers of Aunt Molly, Mickey's wife, urging him to be quiet. But Randolph's father burst noisily into his son's room and sat down heavily on the side of the low bed. Randolph could not pretend sleep with his father wheezing loudly over him, and after a minute he opened his eyes. James had a three or four day growth on his face and his eyes were bloodshot, but he appeared to be sober. He stared blankly at his son for a long while. Suddenly Randolph was aware that his father was crying, the corners of the creased eyes growing watery, and large tears coursed

down his sunburnt and stubbly cheeks and into the corners of his open mouth. His father stood up and walked lethargically from the room without saying a word to his son. Randolph saw his father just one more time in his life, at his mother's funeral, where they stood side by side.

The rise of Randolph Malone as a man of money and influence in Boston is one of many such stories that have encouraged generations to believe that America is a never-ending source of promise and opportunity. While finishing high school he lived in the cellar of an aunt's house. She had recently become a widow and wanted to give her nephew an education. There was life insurance money. Randolph used much of it to go to Europe that summer. He traveled to the usual places – castles, monuments, historic cathedrals – and ended up staying with friends he met in his travels at a villa on the Italian Riviera. What impressed Randolph Malone more than anything else, though, was European commerce and the sophistication European businessmen brought to matters of buying, selling, and exchanging goods and services. Their sophisticated manners were a thin veil over a ruthlessness Randolph had never seen in the United States.

Two years after graduating from Harvard, with a degree in business, Randolph met a man who controlled one of the largest banks in Boston. Although he had never contemplated a career in banking, and was doing well with the surety company that employed him at the time, he accepted William Parker's offer of employment at his bank. He had a knack for banking – it was like any other form of trading, having the instincts to buy low and sell high – and after a year Parker was relying more and more on Randolph's advice to steer his bank along a more aggressive course. Randolph

rose within the organization quickly. His benefactor died two years later and the board of directors unanimously elected Randolph president of the bank. He was then nearly twenty-six, but none of his business associates knew exactly how young he was. Although his salary was modest, he was able to exist comfortably enough in their circle, within a privileged group of businessmen to which he yearned to belong. At the home of one of his fellow directors he met a young woman a few years older than himself and charmed her with his looks, his manners, and one quality he derived from his Irish ancestry which he would have been horrified to acknowledge. Although his hair was jet black, his skin as pale as the fairest brahmin in the city, and his voice absent even the slightest lilt or brogue, Randolph knew how to remember and repeat a story as well as his Uncle Mickey. His stories were not nearly as entertaining as those his Uncle or father told when the family gathered regularly in the summer under the Linden trees to eat a picnic supper, drink stout, and talk into the night in the company of the fireflies. They were entertaining and humorous, though, and this made them all the more remarkable considering Randolph's complete lack of vivacity or a sense of humor.

Gretchen Harrison was the granddaughter of a past governor of Massachusetts. Her father, who served on the board of Randolph's bank, owned a company which built railroad cars and steam locomotives. Randolph and Gretchen sold the company before the first World War to the Pullman Company of Philadelphia for a staggering sum of money. Randolph allowed himself to be favored by Stanford Harrison as the son the older man never had, and studied at the feet of the taciturn and rigid Harrison as though he were his pupil. The most important lesson he learned from Harrison was that one should be kind only to those one loved, and that the rest of humanity was to be

manipulated before chance or one of the many malevolent individuals among the masses of such people stole opportunities that were rightfully one's own. Gretchen was unlike her father. She was sweet and childlike. With those qualities she controlled Randolph effectively. A more emotional man could have countered her sensitivity with his own, but Gretchen's vulnerability disarmed Randolph completely. When he was harsh or intolerant, Gretchen merely pouted and averted her eyes, and Randolph eventually walked up to her, smiled, and put his arms around her. He could not resist her vulnerability.

Randolph's wedding was more elaborate than Gretchen wanted, less so than he preferred. That day was the best evidence that Randolph had overcome his upbringing and arrived in the bosom of a class above his own, but one to which he knew he belonged.

He rose, and when Gretchen thought he could not rise higher, Randolph continued to accumulate and succeed. Three years after he became president of the bank, he borrowed a vast sum of money and purchased a lumberyard. There were no other investors. One night at a party at her parents' house, Gretchen overheard a shouted conversation between her husband and father in her father's study. Gretchen's father spoke heatedly about penury and stupidity. A year later Randolph bought a newspaper with still more borrowed money, and the pressures on their daily life became intolerable. Shortly afterward, however, the mood shifted and it was during that brief, happier time that Gretchen became pregnant. It was 1897.

Gretchen wanted to have five children; Randolph wanted none. They had four. As indifferent and unloving a father as Randolph was, Gretchen more than

compensated as a mother. Hillary was the third child, and followed a sister by three years and a brother by eighteen months. A year after Hillary's birth Gretchen delivered the last Malone child, a boy she decided to name after her husband. Randolph continued to acquire businesses, always with his bank's money, and by the time Hillary was born, in 1900, he had amassed a huge fortune. After Hillary's birth at the end of January, he purchased tickets on an ocean liner with an itinerary for Italy, Portugal and England. He contemptuously rejected Gretchen's suggestion that they visit Dublin. The subject of their only argument about the trip was whether Gretchen could leave her young son and baby girl with a nurse for the eight weeks they would be gone. Gretchen's reluctance to leave her family was not the reason the trip was later canceled. It was another acquisition, this time a hardware supply company, which sent Randolph to Gretchen's room late one night to tell her the trip would have to be put off. She pretended to be disappointed and he pretended to care that she was.

The money Randolph was accumulating meant nothing to Gretchen. It would be difficult for him to accumulate wealth or provide comforts which surpassed those she had been used to all her life. His financial successes were for her as important as they were for him, but only because they made her husband feel more alive than anything she could do for him. It never occurred to Gretchen that Randolph married her for the respectability the marriage would give him, and he went through the motions of marital duty with the respectful attitude of one performing an important duty. When young Randolph was born their lovemaking stopped but for one night each month when he sought and received her assurances that the flow had diminished but not ceased, assuring him there would be no additional unwanted consequences.

Randolph had no more use for Hillary than his father had had for him. She was a girl and the most he could hope for was an advantageous marriage. When she was twelve she spent the summer at a girls camp in Maine and her only letter home, which I obtained from her younger brother Randy, reveals a precocious and lonely young woman yearning for a father's love but wary of any hope of receiving it.

(undated)

Dear Mom and Daddy:

Camp Lucerne is beautiful. Some of the counselors, young men barely older than the girls here, find excuses to walk into the shower before dinner, inquiring about the supply of soap and towels. They think we're so naive as they bound down the wooden steps outside the shower house laughing and bragging about how much they were able to see on their way out the door.

I mention the shower house but I think few of the girls join me each late afternoon. Their hygiene is nearly nonexistent. The daughters of presidents of corporations and major banks have a sour odor most of the time, much like the milk Pearl leaves out in the kitchen on Saturday mornings to make her wonderful bread.

I have written some poems. Simple but sweet, and good enough for me to keep at it, at least for awhile. One of the girls saw me at my desk working on one and when I told her what I was doing, she insisted on reading it. I'd die before sharing one of them.

I miss you both. Daddy suggested the possibility of a visit, and mentioned some business up this way which he might make into a quick detour to this sad but busy place. I hope you can make it, Daddy. The girls are mostly very nice, although they talk only about boys and anatomy and I don't understand most of it.

Love to you both,

Hill

There were, apparently, no fatherly visits to the camp where Hillary spent each summer before entering college in 1917. She told me that contact with her father during

those years was limited to family occasions during the school year, birthdays, anniversaries, and official holidays. Apart from those times, she said, she saw her father only when something happened which required punishment. Not much was needed to punish Hillary. The very appearance and stern voice of her father caused her strident implacability to disappear and the tears to flow liberally, which seemed to have no effect upon him. He merely told her gruffly that what she had done would not be tolerated again. He did not threaten to withhold a privilege and never once suggested physical punishment. He only told her how disappointed he was; she ran from his presence in tears, muttering apologies and promises never to repeat the offending act.

Years later, Hillary shared with Maria Jolas a dream she had when she was quite young in which her father beat her. Maria's husband Gene was away on business and Hillary had had too much wine. It was, Hillary told Maria, both horrible and tantalizing, feeling physical contact with the man from whom she craved the slightest contact, yet being horribly confused by his desire to achieve intimacy by hurting her. Hillary told Gertrude Stein that her father gave her a measure of affection only once in her life. It was the day of her sixteenth birthday. Her mother had arranged a large party in her honor, inviting two dozen young people from a list one of Hillary's closest friends gave Gretchen. One of the guests happened to be a boy for whom Hillary had developed a severe crush, who arrived late and left early with one of Hillary's girlfriends. Hillary found out shortly afterward that the friend had slept with this boy and the news profoundly shook her. A few nights later, Gretchen asked Randolph to speak to their daughter after dinner about this incident. Hillary had been depressed and Gretchen knew what was wrong. Randolph irritably asked his wife what on earth he could

possibly do or say to salve Hillary's wound, that he understood nothing of the sensibilities of young women. Gretchen patiently explained to him that it was the brutishness of young men she wanted him to discuss with his daughter, not Hillary's feelings. A short time later Randolph reluctantly climbed the grand staircase of their recently acquired mansion and trudged down the center hall to his daughter's room. As Hillary related the story to Miss Stein, he was wonderful to her, sitting on the edge of the bed, rubbing her back between the shoulder blades, and telling a story, undoubtedly fictional, about how in his youth he had hurt the feelings of a young woman her age quite inadvertently and regretted it ever since. Hillary told her father in a near whisper that it was not the boy she cried for; it was the dishonor of trusting a friend who knew her feelings for him. At this Randolph chose silence, but his mere presence and the unaccustomed hand on her back meant more to her than anything he had ever done.

Two years later Randolph pronounced no moral judgments about Hillary's condition. She returned home from school and told her mother what had happened. Gretchen agonized for days before she went to Randolph's office on the second floor of the bank building overlooking Commons Street and told him that his daughter was pregnant. Randolph did not agonize. He called his physician, a loyal and trusted friend, and arranged every detail of the abortion without experiencing a single intervening moral dilemma. He had rejected the dictates of Catholicism, along with his family, two decades before. To relatives and friends, Hillary's abortion was nothing more than an uneventful two week trip to her Aunt Eve's in New York. Eve met her at the train, accompanied her to a physician's private office on Park Avenue one stormy morning, the swirling gray clouds overhead providing a perfect accompaniment to the event, and

ministered to Hillary's heavy bleeding and heavier conscience during the ensuing days. The ordeal over, Hillary returned to school. She never saw Todd again.

CHAPTER THREE

Hillary Malone is not mentioned in any of the biographical materials dealing with the lives of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Pound, Dos Passos, Stein, Picasso or any of the other great men and women she knew in the twenties and thirties. That fact alone nearly killed this book at conception, my editor told me. It did not bother his committee that I might fictionalize the interstices between known facts; but it bothered them greatly that I would place Hillary among quite famous people whose lives had been scrutinized for decades and whose biographers did not even acknowledge Hillary Malone's existence. I forwarded to my editor copies of six of Hillary's letters, which contained quite a few hitherto unknown facts about a number of lost generation personalities. The tapestry of detailed information could not have been invented. Anyone reading the letters could see that. There apparently was no question that the letters were written by Hillary Malone, never a hint that they were not real. Over a drink at the Algonquin lounge -- yes, I still go there -- my editor smiled and pronounced the official verdict. "They think it is a helluva story. They'll risk it, even though they think it will be considered a complete fiction."

I make no case for the merits of Hillary's letters as literature, although I suggest she had a way of expressing opinions and describing people and events that was highly evocative. Undoubtedly her poems were far more powerful. Her talent at letter writing manifested itself early, while she was in college. Most of the letters during this period were to her mother; no return letters from Gretchen have survived.

Oct 10, '19

Dear Mom:

I know the leaves there are only now turning, but here they are just beyond the cusp of fullness when the yellows begin to swirl to the ground and the reds, still on the trees, are their most glorious tint. I have two friends, Marylee and Sophie, who like to walk with me or ride bicycles along the wooded paths and country roads. The three of us have decided we can enjoy the beauty of nature, study seriously, and be attractive girls who enjoy our femininity without really being as odd as we appear to many here. We are a force because we stand apart.

I was naive in my expectation that those of our sex privileged enough to become educated would take the task seriously. Most of these women seem to be here to be "finished off" as sophisticates in a false sort of way. Most of the talk is about men and sex, but then I guess I have no right to judge them on that. Apropos that secret, I wrote to Aunt Eve as you requested. It isn't that I don't want to communicate with her. She is wonderful, truly wonderful, but she reminds me of a sadness that occasionally wells up inside me and seems to exist as another organ in my body.

I will not be home for Thanksgiving, as I've accepted Sophie's invitation to stay with her family in New York. Sophie is Jewish and thinks I need to expand my horizons. Didn't believe a word I told her about being half Irish, and Daddy's family and all. She says I am a WASP if she ever saw one. Sophie has lovely olive skin and the largest brown eyes I've ever seen. Her older brother came up to visit her two weeks ago and the girls were nearly hanging out the residence windows to get a look at him. He doesn't look Jewish. He has a classic chiseled Italian face, and is lean and tall. We walked him to the train, Joseph in the middle with his arms around Sophie on one side, me on the other. When I returned to the residence, the girls hated me. I continue to walk alone!

Love, and to Daddy--
Hill

At the end of her junior year she spent the summer on an Indian reservation in New Mexico as a nurse's aide ministering to children ravaged by some disease in a large encampment south of Albuquerque. In school she had read about the plague,

called her mother for permission, and went directly from Smith to New Mexico. Her decision and her haste characterized everything Hillary did.

Only one of Hillary's poems has survived. It was written during her summer in New Mexico.

In the quiet after nightfall rises slowly, slowly,
the sound of the wind and what it sweeps, wholly
invisible upon the plain in the moonless night,
moving in waves until dawn's first light.

Glistening shards from the shattered glass
of dream-filled vessels, ornaments of the mass
given yesterday to the mournful, desperate few
who came for God, the fierce gale did strew.

Canvas wrapped the trees, the broken sticks
of a child's first chair lay upon the bricks
in a pattern with the meaning of an elder's teeth
scattered on the ground by the lowly priest.

Before winter slow hands will put everything back
just as it was, will even from the tree unwrap
the home that blew from where children slept.
Where was our God when, awake, they wept?

It is unfortunate that with the exception of this one piece I obtained from Maria Jolas, none of Hillary Malone's poetry was saved, by her or anyone else. Many of her poems were shared with friends in France. It is a shame not to have Hillary's poetic impressions of those years and those that followed in France. For I believe this one surviving poem elucidates very well the sense of desolation and hopelessness felt by an Indian family which awakens to the devastation of a windstorm. When Hillary began to paint did she close the poetry chapter in her life by destroying all she had written?

It is permissible to speculate that something happened between Hillary and a young American Indian in the summer of 1920. Hillary mentioned that summer's

experience to me only briefly, during a discussion about her childlessness. She said that many times in her life she yearned to have a child but she could not tolerate the concomitant necessity of having a husband. Only now, in the mid-1960s, the dawn of another and far less meaningful revolutionary decade, is it possible for women to think seriously about single parent families without marriage. Hillary would have taken that path were it available to her. It is not that she feared social opprobrium or ostracism -- her record demonstrates a complete lack of regard for custom or popular opinion. There was simply no precedent for it. Her first such yearning seems to have occurred during that summer in the desert with the very sick children of a cast-off minority. She told me during our brief conversation about children that it was during that summer she realized she loved children and also realized she probably would never love a man enough to have one of her own. I inferred that she loved one then but did not love him enough.

Hillary entered her senior year quite changed. The experience of the previous three months had not made her a revolutionary, as it might a nineteen year old today, but it did harden her. There were a number of letters to Gretchen that year but none dwelt on the pleasures of riding and walking on a carpet of wet, colorful leaves in late fall.

Sept 26, '20

Dear Mother:

School is a difficult adjustment. Everything is shallow. Many of the girls became engaged over the summer. That is important, you know.

You said in your last letter that father offered a trip as a graduation gift. I accept the offer. Please tell him, though, that I will need more than three weeks, but will make out on my own after three weeks if that is the

limit of his gift. I want to go to Paris and maybe Rome and am confident I will be away at least two months. Let me know his thoughts in this regard since my plans will require changing if the funds are limited to a three week trip.

MaryLee has found her one true love and Sophie is distant and nearly unapproachable, so I feel alone. Honestly, though, they make their efforts and I may be the one who has changed. A young assistant professor in the English department asked me to a concert two days ago. He told me he likes my poems so much that he must know me better. I have no idea how the news of that invitation got circulated so quickly, or that I said "no" to one everyone agrees does not deserve my rejection.

I read this over and find it depressing. I'll lick the flap and put it on my bureau for a day. It may be best to give you only the side that smiles.

Love,
Hill.

Although at the time Hillary Malone may not have been aware of the meaning of the turmoil inside her, those around her surely felt its outward manifestations. They thought her periods of introversion showed delicate femininity and intellectual reserve; when she was in her extroverted modality she was viewed as sexually promiscuous, hardnosed, and cold. In fact, she recoiled into herself after a painful experience, and when the pain was replaced by anger, at herself or someone else, she reentered the world with boldness, and appeared iconoclastic, unpredictable, and intrepid. The maelstrom inside her must have felt wholly negative -- rejecting everything without embracing anything in its place. She was no mere suffragette. Hillary questioned the validity of every belief she encountered, every social institution she was brought up to respect. This was not always an intellectual process. Often, Hillary examined discrete behaviors and norms in isolation and reached conclusions about their worth, but then never integrated these conclusions into her personality. It was clear to her, for example,

that sex and love are separable in relations between men and women. This view was not a reaction to male hypocrisy, but a conclusion based on observation and her own limited experience. She did not, however, go to the next level of placing love and sexuality into the hierarchy of her own needs.

That men and women are fundamentally equal, however much they reach equality through different combinations of strengths and talents, was for Hillary an assumption, not a conclusion. The conclusions that emanated from this assumption -- those concerning the role of women in society, the role of women in the family, the equality of sexual emancipation -- concerned her because she had nothing with which to replace the old regimes. She felt like an anarchist, tearing down without erecting something better in its place.

It angered Hillary to see a woman like MaryLee, with the potential to produce something tangible other than through a biological process, firmly grip the world as it was instead of as it should be. Hillary was certain her friend would become another Gretchen Malone. Near the end of the last school term Hillary and MaryLee went for a walk. They hadn't been alone together for more than a year. The day reminded Hillary of those fall days nearly two years before when she, MaryLee and Sophie would ride or walk for hours, sharing their feelings and their dreams in counterpart to the falling dead leaves and browning foliage around them. Hillary observed the reversal of the metaphor -- her desultory conversation with MaryLee on this day was accompanied by greening grass and ripe leaf buds on trees. It had rained the night before and the air was fresh and sweet-scented.

"You'll probably become a famous poet and marry a handsome and brooding

French painter," MaryLee said after Hillary told her about her summer plans.

"What will make me successful, MaryLee? Being a famous poet, or getting married?" She said this in an even tone but MaryLee knew when Hillary was talking down to her.

"Either, or both. Take your pick," MaryLee said, spitting the words.

Hillary recoiled inside. She had had no desire to make the afternoon unpleasant, knowing it might be the last time they would be together for a long time, possibly forever. "It's just that there's more than finding a husband."

"Who said I don't want more?"

"Why. . . you did," Hillary said hesitantly.

"Oh, because I said David is all I ever wanted? So what about it, Hillary? He's going to be an important man someday, and not just because his father is in Congress and he'll have a lot of money." MaryLee stopped and picked up an empty bird's nest that had blown out of a tree, examining the intricate, delicate structure. "I'll be his wife and we'll have children. You shouldn't look down on a woman who wants to be a good wife and mother."

"MaryLee, I don't look down on it." That, Hillary thought, was probably a lie.

MaryLee put the bird's nest back on the ground next to the path. "I think you do Hillary, I really do."

"No, I just want you to do something for yourself."

"What could be more important to me than raising a family?"

"I'm not talking about a family. I'm talking about you." They came upon a clearing carpeted by dry, brown pine needles and Hillary stopped and sat on the

ground. "Remember when you told me and Sophie that you wanted to go on after college, that you wanted to be a college teacher?" MaryLee nodded reluctantly. "Well, why can't you do that too?"

"David doesn't want his wife to have a career."

"What does MaryLee want his wife to want?" Hillary asked.

"Do you really think the women who teach here are happy?" MaryLee asked.

"I'm not talking about them."

"Why not? Is that the ideal I should aim for, Hillary? They live for their girls, but we aren't their girls, we are someone else's girls. I will be very happy to have my own."

Hillary was chasing a phantom. MaryLee knew what she wanted. The problem was Hillary did not. She knew only that she could not understand, let alone share, her friend's ambition to be what her mother was, and her mother before that. Something had to change and Hillary wanted to be a part of it. There was no chart for those waters, so why should she be angry with a friend who wanted to live a life guided by the experiences of the women who preceded her. "I'm sorry, MaryLee," she said. "I'm happy that you're happy."

MaryLee reached out for Hillary's hand and squeezed it. "Hill, you're beautiful and bright and ambitious. You want a world you don't know but can imagine. I want one I know only too well. You want to jump ship and bob around in a stormy sea. I think that's grand. But when you chastise me for not jumping in after you, I think you're being unfair. I could just as easily criticize you for being headstrong and impulsive." Hillary put her other hand over MaryLee's. The gesture sealed a bond that dissolved the moment it was forged, and they walked back to their residence and out of each

other's lives forever.

The Merkor was one of the grand ocean liners of its day. When Randolph was told by his wife that Hillary wanted to spend the entire summer in Europe he immediately agreed to finance it, and arranged first class passage on the Merkor departing New York harbor on the twentieth of June, 1921 and returning exactly three months later. Although he promised to accompany Hillary and Gretchen to New York by train on the eighteenth, a crisis in one of his businesses required him to stay in Boston. The somewhat stiff hug and kiss he gave his daughter at the train station imbued the trip to New York with a sadness which Gretchen could not displace with her excited monologue about the wonderful places Hillary would soon be visiting.

The day and a half with Hillary's Aunt Eve passed quickly. Gretchen expected her daughter to be somber with the woman who ushered her through the trauma of the abortion, but Hillary, whether from accelerating excitement over her imminent departure or genuine pleasure at seeing her Aunt Eve, was animated and happy. On Saturday morning the three women cried in Hillary's stateroom when two short blasts of the ship's deep, vibrant horn signaled all who were not passengers to disembark. Hillary accompanied her mother and aunt to the gangway and waved to them for a few minutes after the ship pulled away from its pier in the wakes of four large tugboats.

Three days later, on the train from Calais to Paris, Hillary opened her small travel case, took out a canvas and leather toilette sack Sophie had given her, stepped over the outstretched legs of the sleeping young couple across from her, and walked to the back of the car to visit the bathroom. She slipped her dress and camisole off her shoulders, sponge bathed her torso and face, applied a little makeup, brushed her rich,

wavy, chestnut hair, and returned to her seat. As she watched the sleeping couple awaken, very slowly at first, then with the quickening realization it was morning, Hillary wondered if she would ever feel passion for a man. Even Sophie, who men did not find attractive for inexplicable reasons, was sexually aware. She had explained to Hillary the basic technique women used to masturbate. Hillary did it now and then, usually lying in her bath, and the release, when it came, seemed not sexual at all, but rather like eliminating a morning's full bladder.

No, she thought to herself as she watched the couple opposite her rub their eyes, glance around, steal a quick kiss, and search the floor for their things. No. She could not imagine enjoying a man against her body again. The summer before was a fluke. Like then, she might again know men but they would never penetrate her flesh as far as the heart. Young love had passed her by.

Or had it? Aunt Eve, in the vestibule of her apartment the day . . . how long ago? Telling her never to abandon hope. Although Eve's husband had died in Italy during the war, she soon began to see men again. With her full, rounded figure, alabaster skin, jet black hair, and giving and forgiving nature, Hillary was sure there would be another uncle one day. "I need a man," Eve told her, "and so do you. With me it is a physical thing but not a sexual one. You know, pipe smoke in the drawing room, rough soles of a pair of feet at the foot of the bed, the scent of lilac shaving soap in the bath."

"Why don't you just find a companion?" Hillary asked.

"My dear, a few men have suggested that kind of 'arrangement'," Eve said, "But there are other compensations for the effort a man requires." Eve tittered, and Hillary looked at her suspiciously. "Oh, come now!" Eve admonished her niece. "You had a

bad start, but don't harden yourself. It is like dying young to abandon hope."

Hillary repeated the words to herself as the train slowed at a small town on the outskirts of Paris, the few people on the platform outside the window looking sleepy and lifeless.

After he visited the bathroom, the young man in the seat opposite Hillary's fished a bottle of water from his rucksack and poured some into a glass. He swallowed most of it, refilled the glass and handed it to his companion, who drank it down. He refilled the glass again, handed it to Hillary, and began putting things in his bag, talking to his friend about the problems he thought he'd have because he spoke no French. Hillary sipped the warm, clear water and stared out the window at the small houses, which seemed to stand closer and closer together as they neared the Paris station. Orange tile roofs.

At the station, Hillary kissed and hugged the couple she traveled with. While they started off, on foot, Hillary found a porter, then another, and motioned for one to load her bags onto a cart while telling the other, in perfect American college French, to get a taxi for her and the many bags and trunks. She did not want to queue up in front of the station with a hundred other travel-weary people. She could see them through the front windows pushing heavy bags along a snaking corridor of faded purple velvet ropes strung between unpolished brass standards. Her American five dollar bill, folded twice and pressed between the thumb and forefinger of her left hand, worked well. The porter's eyes darted left and right, as though afraid he would lose the American woman if he left her a moment too long, glanced down again at the note in her hand, and with an anxious look on his face walked quickly through a side door. The other man stacked

her bags on his cart and waited patiently. His greed had not been aroused; to him she was just another American lady who had a ridiculous number of bags which needed carrying a mere fifty meters to the curb. American ladies were severe tippers and he figured she would hand him 20 centimes for his efforts. He lit a cigarette. The acrid odor reached Hillary's nostrils and they flared. She coughed delicately.

The taxi porter scurried back into the waiting room and told the second man to hurry up. The porter with the cart took a long, slow drag on his cigarette, stubbed out a butt not more than a quarter inch long on the stone tile, exhaled deeply, and began pushing the metal cart. Two taxis waited outside. The drivers, who were violating station rules by coming around the side to take a passenger, hurriedly loaded Hillary's bags and trunks. The one in front, who spoke a little English, held the back door for Hillary. She got in after paying each of the porters five dollars. Leaning against the back of the seat, feeling very tired, Hillary enjoyed a rare moment of gratitude for her father's money.

Whistles blew shrilly at street corners, voices laced the air through the open window, fresh scented and musky odors rode invisible currents into her taxi. When they stopped for a signal at one corner Hillary could smell bread baking. She smiled. There was no excitement, no apprehension. "Home," it called to her. Home. The voices were familiar, the odors like yesterday morning's wet newspaper fetched from a dewy lawn, a few blades of fresh cut grass, green and wet, stuck to the headlines, giving the newsprint a delicate perfume. It was not a joyous homecoming, waving to friends, eyes filled with tears. It was more like remembering old loves on light summer nights, caressing her own breasts in bed and wishing they were the delicate fingers of the boy

now on his way home across town having the inverted physical sensation spread upon his fingertips. No, it was not joyous. It was a feeling akin to being away for two days and walking through the front door, leaving it open for a moment to wash the musty hallway with the evening air, greeting the cat that rubbed its silks against her stockinged calf, opening windows, throwing a suitcase on the floor, leave it till tomorrow, changing into the worn, white silk robe, pouring wine, calm regular breaths, half reclining in the living room, retrospective of the day. The unhurried, familiar, comforting moments from before the front door is closed until after the light has gone out in the upstairs bedroom.

Hillary Malone never questioned this strong feeling of "arriving," the full sweep of the circle, as she rode through the streets of Paris to her first destination, a hotel on the rue Rivoli. She merely accepted it. Her hotel sat on a corner near the Louvre. Her father had selected it, or more probably arranged for someone else to do so. She would change it in a day or two, after she had the opportunity to feel her way along the streets, eat in some restaurants, meet people, real people, the men and women who moved around the city each day. At the hotel she let the chambermaid unpack only the small suitcases. Hillary slept a long time, until the next afternoon, waking once in the morning to close the drapes in the bedroom to shut out the bright, June sun and to leave a note in the sitting room saying she did not want to be disturbed.

On the street late the next afternoon she wore a black skirt and blouse, simple shoes, no hat and no jewelry. She walked to Notre Dame and crossed the river. It was nearing dusk and the Seine was a deep gray, small waves lapping against the stone and rock below the rampart of the viaduct. As she began to climb the hill up from the Quai St. Michel along the Boulevard St. Michel she had an uncertain moment. It was

due partly to the changed atmosphere in Montparnasse, and to the chill breeze which made her regret she hadn't remembered the sweater she laid out on the bed. She decided to stop at the first bistro and order a coffee and cognac to get warm. Turning right at the rue Racine, Hillary walked another block. The terrace of the Cafe Voltaire was covered by a wide, dark green awning which looked black in the street's deep shade. Despite the chill in the air she sat on the terrace instead of inside and tried hard not to display outwardly the excitement welling up inside her. She did all right with the friendly but distracted waiter, who cocked his head, repeated what she said to him to be sure he understood her, and bustled off, showing as he walked away the fraying hem of his black waistcoat, his only hint of poverty. When she left the cafe, warmed but slightly apprehensive about the quickening nightfall, she left for him all the change from her twenty franc note -- eleven and six. She told herself she had to be more frugal. There was no buying acceptance here.

At the hotel she encountered a problem. Her father had called and was enraged to learn that his daughter was out and no one knew where she was. The young and very handsome assistant manager told Hillary with considerable emotion that he had explained to Mr. Malone (which he rhymed with baloney, making Hillary laugh rudely) that the hotel was not a boardinghouse for young women and it was not their habit to keep track of their guests.

"What did he say?" Hillary asked him in English.

The young man frowned. "He disconnect the telephone," he said.

"You mean he hung up on you?" Hillary asked.

"Yes mademoiselle, with a loud noise."

"I'll call him later," Hillary told him. "And it won't happen again. Please accept my apology." She paused for a moment. "I'll be checking out tomorrow."

Things happened quickly. The next day she checked into a small hotel in Montparnasse and in the late afternoon, after putting away her things and taking a bath, walked the streets. The late afternoon sun cast long shadows on the wide boulevards and nearly darkened the narrow side streets she passed. She stopped for an early supper at Rotonde, sitting at a small table just inside the entrance next to a boisterous group of men speaking three languages, none English. One of the men came over to her table after her coffee was served and introduced himself. She caught only the last name -- Aragon.

"Is that Greek?" Hillary asked.

"Greek? No. I think not. Well, perhaps long ago. It is French. Malone, I believe, is Irish?"

"Yes."

Aragon overheard a remark at the next table, rose suddenly, walked over to his friends, and spoke to one of them harshly, in Italian. Apparently, his tone was an affectation, for the other men started to laugh, and then Aragon did. Hillary wondered if she was the subject of Aragon's joke. He did not sit down but returned to Hillary's table and took the chair he had vacated.

"How long are you here? In France, I mean," Aragon asked her.

Hillary looked at him, trying to guess his age. He had dark brown hair with no gray in it and light blue eyes, but his face was lined, and the skin stretched taut over his high cheekbones was leathery. "I am staying as long as it interests me," she responded

finally.

Aragon frowned, as though unsure he understood her answer. "Have you been here long?" he asked slowly in English.

"Not long. Is your family Parisian?"

"Oh no. My father died in the war. Mother lives in Dijon. That is where I grew up."

"When did you come to Paris?"

Aragon smiled at her, appreciating the dexterity with which Hillary shifted the interview to him. "A while ago."

"What do you do?" she asked, ignoring his vagueness.

One of the men at the other table shouted something to Aragon, and his reply, again in Italian, seemed to indicate he wanted to be left alone. He caught the waiter on his way by the table and ordered cognac. Folding his arms across his chest, he stared at Hillary. "I am an artist."

"What kind of artist?"

"You know, mademoiselle, I was not trying to disturb your privacy by joining you here."

Hillary understood. He did not want to talk about himself. "I am twenty-two, just graduated from a college in Massachusetts. My father's father was an immigrant but my father is wealthy. He gave me this trip as a gift."

"So, you are tourist."

"No."

"No?"

"I plan to stay."

"How long?"

"I have no idea." Hillary smiled at Aragon. "There is something about Paris for an artist, isn't there?"

"Something about?" Aragon frowned with incomprehension.

"I'm sorry. Paris inspires the artist, does it not?"

Aragon still frowned. He turned in his chair and said something to one of the men at the next table, a stocky younger man with a bushy, black mustache, who did not respond. He turned back to Hillary. "For some, yes, mademoiselle Malone. For some."

"I want to write a poem about the way I felt the day I arrived. The sensation I had all that day."

Aragon's casual demeanor was transformed into rapt attention. He sat up in his chair, his elbows on the small table, and leaned forward. "You write poetry?"

"I did. Not for some time now, though."

"And why?"

"You know something? I don't know the answer to that question. Probably because I haven't asked it of myself."

"Did you bring your poems with you to France?"

"Yes, sure."

"I must see them."

"I think not."

"Why, for God's sake? Are they not good?"

Hillary laughed. "Yes, they're good. I think so, anyway."

"Then why can I not read them?"

"Because I don't know you."

"I am Aragon," he said, jabbing at his chest with a thumb.

Hillary just stared at Aragon with a quizzical look. "Perhaps one day."

Aragon relaxed a little, leaning back in his chair. "Miss Malone, I am a decent man and would not abuse your trust. Perhaps you could meet me here tomorrow, or later today even, with one or two of your poems. I am in a position to evaluate them . . . but with sensitivity, I assure you."

Throughout their conversation, Hillary never felt sexual hunger emanating from Aragon. He did not look at her that way, the way most men did. He seemed only mildly interested in talking with her until she mentioned poetry. Now he seemed attracted – not to her, but to the possibility she was an artist like himself. Was he a poet, she wondered? A painter? A writer? She trusted him but she wasn't sure why. "My hotel is not far," she said tentatively. "I will show you my poems."

An hour later Aragon threw the last sheaf of paper on the table between his chair and the rocker on which Hillary sat. Pages were strewn on the floor of her sitting room.

"The last one is dated more than a year ago," he said. He had meticulously noted the dates Hillary recorded on the backs of the papers. He sighed. "Where are the rest?"

"That is all of them," Hillary said.

"I read English much better than I speak it. You have a very definite talent and I am upset you have not written poems in so long a time."

"You're very kind."

"Kindness, no. Simply the truth." Aragon's brow furrowed and he looked furtively

at Hillary. "I want you to meet some friends of mine. One in particular. Would you like?" Hillary said she would. "Meet me at Rotonde Saturday at half past four," he told her. "We will go to the rue de Fleurus together." He said this casually, assuming she knew the import of that street name.

"I'm sorry, but what is on the rue de Fleurus?" Hillary asked.

"Ah, of course," Aragon said. "You just arrived. That is where Gertrude Stein lives." He looked intently at her for a long moment. "May I take these two?" he asked, holding up two pages for her to see. "I want to show them to my friend Gertrude."

"No, thank you," Hillary said stiffly. "I don't know her."

"But until this evening you didn't know me!" Aragon frowned, looking confused.

"Yes, but I met you and then you asked. To have someone read them before I have the opportunity to meet her would be . . ."

"Don't you know about Gertrude?" he asked.

"No."

"Well, mademoiselle, she is a most serious writer. And art lover."

Hillary was uncomfortable. "I don't mind your reading these," she said, her arms outstretched to the papers around her. "But I would like to meet this woman before she reads my poems."

"Miss Malone. You will meet her Saturday. I want her to have the chance to read these first," he said, holding up the two pages again, "before you encounter each other. You will be glad for it, I promise you."

Hillary acquiesced.

Stein read the poems Aragon brought to her the next morning. He sat and

waited while she read. "Quite remarkable," the large woman said, taking off her reading glasses. "How old did you say she is?" He didn't know. Then Aragon told Stein that Hillary knew practically no one in Paris. "I suspect that will change rather soon," Stein said, her eyes scanning one of the poems a second time.

The night Aragon left her apartment, Hillary wrote to Sophie. Despite their falling out, Hillary believed Sophie was the only person who could understand and feel her thrill.

June 28, 1921

Dearest Sophie:

Paris surpasses my expectations each day and as I've only been here a few days, I fear my head may burst before the end of the month. I wish you were here with me; we could laugh together like we used to.

I feel lonely but more excited than lonely. I met a man who seemed interested in helping me meet people, and decidedly uninterested in me as a woman. I would guess he is about thirty, and there are so many pretty women in Paris. He invited me to go with him to Gertrude Stein's house on Saturday. Should I honestly have known about her? She seems well known in Paris among writers and musicians.

I hope this letter reaches you. I only had your parents' address in New York. What is going on with you, Sophie? Can you come over here this summer? Can we be friends again?

After making an initial, rather insulting attempt to show what a loving and concerned father he is, I have had no word from Daddy. Mother writes a short letter nearly every day and the humdrum news about her life and what their friends are doing seems so far removed from me now. I realize it was only physical proximity to my family which gave it any importance before. Maybe I will go to Austria and have Dr. Freud explain it all to me!

There is a mood here different from anything I've ever felt. It is hard to grasp. Paris shows a class structure but among certain types of

people, but it appears that rich and poor mingle without much regard for those differences. And when you cross the river there is a charge in the atmosphere and many more Americans and Britishers. Please come and have fun with me.

Love,

Hillary

On Saturday Hillary attended Miss Stein's regular soiree with Louis Aragon. When they arrived, he introduced her to their hostesses, Miss Stein and the diminutive Alice B. Toklas, and promptly disappeared in the large, crowded apartment. Hillary could tell Stein had read the poems because she greeted her with unexpected warmth.

"My dear," she said, taking Hillary's hand in hers, and placing her other palm over it. "It is a pleasure to meet you. Truly."

Miss Stein walked Hillary over to an unoccupied corner of the room. As impressive a woman as Gertrude Stein was to look at, for a moment a large portrait of her hanging on the wall made it difficult to focus right away on the real Gertrude Stein. "You should not have worried about Louis showing me your poems," Stein said cordially.

Hillary felt heat in her cheeks. "I'm sorry, but I wrote them for myself," Hillary said.

"That is a virtue only when the poems are mediocre, Hillary."

"You liked them?"

"Oh yes. I do not write in verse, but I know good verse. Your poems are very good, one even is extraordinary." Stein's head lifted. "Do you know anything about the

man you came here with? Do you know Louis Aragon well?"

"No."

"He didn't tell you about himself?"

"He told me he is a decent man and I believed him. He said practically nothing about himself. Why?" Hillary asked.

"Do you know *Feu de joie*?"

"No."

"I see," Stein said, pursing her lips. "Louis Aragon is a young man, I suppose not much older than you, but already he is a great poet. He leads a literary movement known as Dada."

"Dada?" A strange, puzzling word. In French, it means "hobbyhorse."

"Put another way, nihilism aimed at our culture." Stein said.

"And he thinks my poetry is good? It certainly is not nihilistic."

"Oh yes, he likes it very much, although it is quite different from his, a good deal simpler, and in my opinion, fresher. The iconoclasm of the poet is not buried very far. I would like to see more of your poems, Hillary."

"Didn't he tell you? I haven't written one in a long time."

"That is unfortunate. If we become friends, I will probably nag you about that. Louis gave me only two. He said there are others. May I see them?"

Hillary was confused. She was flattered that her poetry was appreciated by two accomplished writers, one himself a well-known poet, but for her, poetry was like a diary, not an art form subject to public scrutiny. She considered how coy she must have seemed, especially in that environment. "Of course you can," Hillary said, her face

frozen in a frown. "I'll bring them by next week."

"Don't look so stricken, Hillary. I will read them only for my pleasure and return them to you unmolested by a stranger's eye."

Hillary was about to respond, to tell Stein that she did not want to appear ungrateful or niggardly about sharing them, when a man entered Stein's drawing room who froze the expressions on everyone's face and stopped all talk.

Picasso had not visited Gertrude Stein's apartment for a long while. In February Olga had borne his first child, Paulo, and in May the curtain had risen on Cuadro Flamenco, the fourth Diaghilev ballet whose scenery and costumes Picasso designed. Miss Stein told Hillary that "Pablo moves among a different society of people most of the time now," and barely suppressed her dislike for Olga. Responding to something Hillary said about Aragon, the heavy woman grinned smugly and suggested that Hillary look for a spark between him and Picasso. "Aragon has out a new work, *Anicet ou le Panorama, roman*, and the painter Bleu in it appears to parody his old friend Pablo," Miss Stein told her. But Hillary noticed no tension between the two men, who spoke quietly together on the other side of the room, Aragon smiling and Picasso looking amused.

Picasso did not stay long. But before he departed Aragon waved to Hillary, beckoning her over to where he stood with the artist. Picasso was shorter than her, dark skinned, and powerfully built, with a large crop of black hair which hung down over his forehead. She noticed his coal black eyes, and the electrifying intensity shining from them. He did not offer his hand but merely nodded imperceptibly as they were introduced. Those eyes seemed to burn through her, and she averted hers. He spoke

French awkwardly and listened to Aragon with interest as the writer told him that Hillary had only recently come to Paris and planned to stay indefinitely. Hillary could feel her cheeks burn as the artist continued to stare at her as they stood and listened to Aragon. The moment was dreamlike, and as Hillary refocused her eyes after allowing them to drift somewhere into the middle of the room, Picasso was saying goodbye to Aragon and "mademoiselle."

Two hours later, as Hillary climbed the steps to her hotel room, she was certain she would see Picasso again. All her life similar premonitions came over her, not strictly an ability to foresee the future but more an intuitive certainty that a particular event or coincidence was in some way connected to an as-yet unknown future event or stream of concrete experiences. As she prepared for bed that night she had the same feeling of certainty. She was excited. But she was also frightened.

CHAPTER FOUR

As heady as Hillary's experiences in Paris were that summer, nothing was as exciting as her introduction to Picasso. After moving out of her hotel and into a smaller one, really a boardinghouse, on the left bank, she expected she would see Picasso again soon. But weeks went by without a sign of him anywhere. Hillary did not while away her days anticipating a reintroduction to the painter. She met people. Lots of people. One in particular, Maria Jolas, took an immediate liking to her, and they spent more and more time in each other's company. Hillary spent hour upon hour in the Louvre and in the evenings met her new friends in restaurants on the Left Bank. The tempo of activity and intertwining relationships increased each day. Yet she sensed she was waiting for something.

Six weeks later Picasso ran into Hillary at an outdoor booksellers on the left bank of the Seine. The water was gray, and foamy waves dotted with refuse lapped against the stone ramparts. The sky was a gunmetal color reminiscent of late fall days in New England before the first winter storm. Hillary was standing at the booksellers when suddenly she felt a presence beside her and turned. Picasso, even shorter than she remembered, stood in front of her, wearing light gray scrub pants and a thick woolen sweater, his clumsy canvas boots sticking out at the bottom of his pants legs like large root balls from a pair of thin trees. He did not smile invitingly, as one might expect, but rather scowled at her disapprovingly.

"You are still here," he said in awkward French.

Hillary did not know what to say to him. She thought of a dozen responses in that brief moment. None suited, so she said nothing. Picasso, undoubtedly thinking her

unable to respond because mesmerized by him, smiled understandingly. "Yes, you are still here," he said, almost under his breath. He held out his hand for hers and led her along the quay, the green leaves of the trees above them blowing in a criss-crossed current back and forth.

They walked down a stone staircase to the water's edge. Picasso bent down along the parapet and stood up with a charred stick in his hand, the remnant of a fire someone had used to ward off a cold night. He walked over to the gray stone wall and, lifting the stick as a magician might, he swept the tip over the surface so quickly that it seemed almost a meaningless gesture. It seemed like one swirling line; the charred stick never appearing to leave the surface of the rampart. Eventide had fallen and long shadows from the setting sun hid the surface of the wall. Hillary walked closer to it. Slowly the image appeared, at first dark gray upon light gray stones. But a cloud blew past the sun just as she came alongside the artist, and an orange glow illuminated the wall in front of her.

"My God," she whispered.

"It is for you," Picasso uttered. It was the face of a woman, high cheekbones, a pointed chin, and two slightly oval shaped eyes. It was Hillary's face, four feet wide, etched upon the rampart below the bridge which crossed the Quai d'Orsay.

"I am at a loss for words," she told him in French. The double translation from English to French and French to Spanish must have left out the meaning entirely, for Picasso merely stared at her, a slight smile formed by his blood red lips, his eyes dark and alive. "I don't know what to say," she reformulated the remark, and this he seemed to understand, for he moved quite close to Hillary and covered her mouth with two

outstretched fingers, indicating he wanted her to say nothing.

"I wish I could take it with me," she uttered in awe.

"You will," the artist said. Then he looked sad. "I give my art only for money, as much as I can get," he told her. "But not this."

"It is me?" she asked, hoping it was not an insult.

"Yes. You." Picasso gestured toward the wall, now barely visible again in the twilight. "Thank God I cannot sell the wall which holds the Seine at bay," he said, looking away from her.

"Are you sad?" she asked him.

"I am, yes."

"Would you walk me home?"

"It would be a pleasure, mademoiselle," he responded, a dimpled smile on his face.

Hillary Malone was not an expert in the art of lovemaking, but she knew, as she lay awake in the early hours of the next morning, that the experience she had with Picasso was not the kind of out-of-body experience other girls had described to her. He masked proficiency with an awkward roughness, entering her without concern for her comfort and, she thought, reaching his own release far too quickly. He was no longer mesmerizing and mysterious, his near brutality a transparent cover for his clumsiness.

Picasso came to her room one more time, about a week later, knocking softly on the door after she had gone to bed. He was again very sad and didn't utter a word after she invited him in and fetched a bottle of wine from the cabinet over the sink in the little kitchen alcove of her room. Picasso sat on a low, stuffed chair in the corner, the scone

from the far wall casting gray shadows over his slumped figure. She handed him the bottle and he put it between his knees, pulling the cork expertly, poured each of them a glass, and stared sullenly at Hillary, who had pulled up the chair she recently purchased and placed it five feet in front of him. She smiled but the artist's black eyes only looked back at her, unblinking, dull and lifeless, without their accustomed fire.

They sat together for almost an hour saying nothing. Hillary was weary and tired, wanting to do something for the man but afraid to give him what he probably came for. Finally, she told herself it didn't matter. "Do you want to stay here tonight?" she asked.

"May I?"

"Of course."

"Why do you say 'of course' after the other night?"

"Why should I not say it after the other night?"

"I was not good to you, is all."

"You knew it? You know it?"

Silence. Then, almost inaudibly, "Yes."

"Why were you 'not nice,' Pablo? Can you tell me?" Calling him by his first name seemed right.

Picasso drained his glass, emptied the bottle into it, and stood up. He looked down at Hillary in her chair. There was pain in the eyes, some inexplicable suffering evinced by the way his arms hung at the sides of his muscular torso. "It is the way I am when I don't want someone to get close to me."

"You mean the way you are with women who are only to be used?" Hillary's frankness shocked her.

Picasso smiled. "You do have spirit, don't you? No, mademoiselle, I am a wonderful lover with the whores. It is women who may possibly want more than 20 francs or a wicked experience to share with their friends to whom I cannot show tenderness."

"Because they might get through to something you want only for yourself?"

"In a way . . . but no," Picasso said, walking back to the low chair and sitting in it. "I don't want it at all. It is horrific, that 'something.' It is dark and ugly, misshapen and vile. One who gets too close sees it." He stared at Hillary again for a few minutes and then observed, "You are very tired, aren't you? I'll go now."

"I thought you wanted to spend the night here?"

"'Here?' or *with* you?"

"Whatever way you want," Hillary told him, staring into black eyes surrounded by gray shadows.

She held him until he fell off to sleep. He had made no attempt to make love to her. In the morning he let her into himself, at least that is what she presumed from their gentler, longer, lovemaking. Then Picasso got up, washed his face in the basin, pulled on his clothes, and left Hillary Malone's apartment for the second and last time.

Many years later, as Picasso's fame grew and he achieved recognition as the century's greatest living painter, Hillary never wondered why the artist came twice to her bed. Picasso had many lovers, and throughout his life gave in to sudden urges for women as diverse as Fernande Olivier, Marcelle Humbert, Olga Koklova, Marie-Therese, and Dora Maar. Hillary never thought of her experience with him as one pearl in a long necklace, as any of those women might have thought of themselves. Unlike

Aragon, Picasso knew nothing about Hillary beyond her exceptional beauty and sensuality, knew nothing about her poetry. It would not have mattered to him if he did. She never thought of the two nights they shared as a simple conquest for him. Nor did she consider that Picasso may have been striking back at Aragon by seducing a woman in whom he assumed Aragon had an interest. For her, to sleep with Picasso was to confront something mysterious and a little terrifying, as when a young child, afraid of the imaginary monster lurking in the closet, finally garners the courage to open the door, only to see there are just clothes hanging there. Temporary possession of her body was a gift to an unhappy soul with whom she had no desire to merge.

Sophie did not believe anything Hillary wrote in her next letter; in fact, she thought her friend had gone mad. "Dearest Sophie," it began.

I have had a lover, not a myopic French boy but a man, a famous man -- Pablo Picasso. You may say it is wrong to sleep with a famous artist who only wants sex with a young mistress, or that because he is married I have done something doubly horrible, but I tell you it was not wrong at all. In fact, it was very right. He is sad and lonely and frightened. And he feels a little cheap inside because, I think, he knows that the reward of society's money and society's approval is worth more to him than whatever originally motivated him.

I say all this yet I know nothing whatever about what makes this great man so sad, so completely dead inside. Do not think for a moment that he gave me a tale of woe about a wife who spends too much money, or doesn't understand him, or sleeps apart from him. He did not mention her name once. The only veiled reference to his life at all was that he was living now on the outskirts of Paris and needed to hire a car to take him home the last morning he was here. The second morning. The first was not so fine.

I know I am babbling, and that you think I am crazy. But I'm not. This experience has taught me that we're all

alike, afraid, lonely, insecure, looking for whatever it is everyone else is looking for and we don't know what it is. I begin to see where all this may lead.

Please write to me at the above address. I want so much to hear the response to my depravity.

Love,

Hillary.

Sophie responded with a brief note containing no references to Hillary's letter; it said only that she was going to be in France early the following year and would like to see her. The same day she received Sophie's note, Hillary got a letter from her father. In it, he told her he had concluded she was not returning to the States at the end of the summer and expressed his outrage at her presumption that he would continue sending her money simply because she was his daughter. Hillary replied briefly. "I do not know how long I will be here. If you feel I am taking advantage of you, then say so and advise me when my allowance will stop so I can find work here. I am not living extravagantly and am sure I can manage." Randolph Malone did not respond directly, in writing, but the checks that had arrived every other Friday did not stop.

Through the summer and fall Hillary spent more and more time with Maria Jolas. Maria liked Hillary's complete lack of inhibition. Her husband Gene liked Hillary's poetry, which, with Hillary's permission, Gertrude Stein shared with him. Maria told me once that she frequently baited her young friend because Hillary's responses were so completely outrageous. Maria introduced Hillary to Hadley Hemingway on a hot Saturday in late spring when "Hem" was at the races with a friend of his. Hillary liked Hadley very much but felt sorry for the hand-wringing dependency she noticed

whenever the writer's wife talked about him. Hillary knew that Hadley's husband was a writer because Hadley told her that is what he did "when he isn't pushing something out for the newspaper." Hillary had never heard of Ernest Hemingway. In the spring of 1922 no one had.

In December Hillary moved again, the third time, into a three room flat on the Boulevard St. Michel. It had a small living room or parlor, an enormous bedroom with three large windows facing the tree-lined street, and an equally spacious kitchen. The bathroom was also oversized and had a large cast-iron bathtub on bear-claw feet in the middle of the room. Her few possessions could not begin to fill the space; she hung bed sheets she had stolen from the hotel where she stayed the first few days in Paris on two of the windows in the bedroom. She wrote to her father asking for more funds and he responded promising half what she requested with a strong rebuke for not writing to her mother. "It is a lion's den, I've heard," he wrote to her. "Although Mother tells me your virtue outweighs your folly, I'm not so sure. You're hotheaded and Irish and I fear the only attribute you inherited from your mother is your gender." Hillary showed this letter to Maria.

"He goes on and on. . ." Hillary said, smiling, as Maria folded the letter and gave her young friend a concerned look.

"He wants you to come home, obviously." They were seated at a table far inside a bistro, away from the noisy crowd gathered around the bar. They had stopped there late in the afternoon to rest and have some wine. "I don't have the feeling he misses you but rather that he regards your absence as an insult. You are his prize?" she asked.

Hillary could not sip wine. She drank it like a child drinks milk. The waiter noticed her empty glass and she nodded at his raised brow. "Yes, in a sense." Hillary sat with tight, puckered lips, her voice low, her eyes avoiding Maria's penetrating look. "I am the only thing really his that has a chance of being above the circumstances of his birth. You see," she looked at Maria to see if her friend really was interested in this story. She wondered if she had told it to her before. She thought not. "You see," she repeated, "my mother is fine and wonderful. He knows that. But he also knows she is only his wife, not his blood. She could divorce him and sever their bond. His daughter will always be his. Voila. The daughter must be something she cannot be. She must be him inside, his determination, his values, his quite real hatred of society, and yet she must behave like his wife, look like his wife, be refined and predictable like his wife. And above all," Hillary said fiercely, "she must be controllable like his wife. I've been here six months longer than he expected and he can't stand it."

Maria gazed at Hillary with an amazed look. "My dear," she told Hillary, "I doubt if any man will ever control you."

"Just for brief moments?" Hillary asked teasingly, and they laughed. "How about your husband, Maria, are you still in love with him?"

"We've made a commitment to each other, Hill. With that comes the realization after awhile that love develops into something else. He calls it mature love, but I think that is too hopeful a name for it. We enjoy each other's company, we have a lot of friends, and we have sex once a month. That's about it. My heart no longer throbs."

"That's sad."

"Why? What's the alternative?"

"Don't be married at all, just have men for sex or companionship when you have a need."

"And when Hillary Malone is old and feeble?"

Hillary thought a moment. "Certainly there are old and feeble men in the same situation." They laughed again. Maria liked the way Hillary made her laugh.

"A relationship," Maria told her, "takes on the qualities of some favorite thing, an old pair of pants, worn shoes, gloves coming apart at the seams -- you don't want to throw them out because they're . . . well, they're comfortable and familiar and soothing."

"A relationship with a man ultimately means compromising oneself, doesn't it?" Hillary asked.

"You will learn that everything you do will be a compromise. You will have to negotiate all your expectations, desires, ambitions, even lusts, with someone else. So what if that someone else is the same man most of the time?"

Hillary caught the phrase "most of the time." "If you're right, and I'm sure you are," she smiled and tilted her head in a small bow to her older friend, "I can't see buying into an entire bundle of built-in compromises. I think I'll take mine one at a time."

"I love you already. I hope your way of looking at things doesn't cause you too much hurt," Maria said.

"Me too." Hillary looked into Maria's eyes and repeated her hope. "Me too."

The restaurant was filling up with the early dinner crowd, and since Maria and Hillary occupied a table for four, they paid the check and walked out. It was cold, one of those wet winter afternoons that become bone chilling after the sun dips behind the city. Maria put on her hat and turned to Hillary.

"Tomorrow you meet Hem. You're coming to our house for lunch, aren't you?"

"Of course." Hillary thought for a moment and added: "Will I find the budding writer irresistible?"

"I suppose so," Maria said, frowning. "But take it is a personal request from me not to appear too irresistible yourself, all right? I like Hadley enormously. I want you to meet Hem because he's going to be a great writer one day and you should meet him, and also because I believe he knows single young men."

"Aha, I see the outline of your wicked plan." Hillary said in a humorous falsetto. Maria found a taxi and Hillary declined her invitation to share it for the few blocks to her apartment, saying she preferred to walk. Maria started to object, glancing up at suddenly threatening gray clouds and the wind whipping the small trees along the boulevard, but then thought better of it.

"See you at one tomorrow," she said through the open window of the taxicab.

"Yes, to meet the great Hemingway," Hillary said, bowing deeply as the driver of the taxicab pulled away from the curb.

CHAPTER FIVE

"Hash, that's horse cock," Hemingway muttered under his breath to his wife. Hillary, seated directly across from him, could hear the words. She wanted to giggle but didn't, for she had immediately found Hemingway intimidating.

Gene Jolas sat at the end of the table to Hillary's left. To the Hemmingways' left, at the opposite end of the table, sat Maria. Seated next to each other, immediately to Hillary's right, were Sylvia Beach, a petite woman with beautiful brown eyes and very shapely legs, whom Hillary guessed to be in her mid-thirties, and Adrienne Monnier, a matronly woman younger than Miss Beach but clearly attached to her as the other half of a couple. Apparently the rue de l'Odeon bookstore, owned by Miss Monnier, was the prototype for Shakespeare and Company, a bookstore which served many another purpose, that was owned by Miss Beach. The latter establishment was referred to reverently by Hemingway several times during the luncheon.

"You said something, Hem?" Gene Jolas asked the writer with an amused look.

Hemingway had thick, dark hair and a full, black moustache, a rounded face, and a heavy but muscular torso. The backs of his large hands and fingers were hirsute. Although he clearly liked Hillary's looks, his eyes wandered most of the time to Miss Beach, as though he was attracted to her and confused by her purely artistic interest in him. Throughout the meal Hillary said nothing to Miss Monnier, whom she could not see two seats away on the same side of a rather small dining table. Hemingway turned to Jolas and smiled.

"Nothing for you," he said rudely. Hadley glanced at him with disapproval and he shot her a mean look.

Miss Beach weighed in to the moment's discomfort. "James is very pleased with your reaction to the book, Hem, very pleased." Hillary knew the book was called *Ulysses* but hadn't read it, although she had started it and put it aside. She looked down at her plate and concentrated on eating her lunch. Everyone was talking about "the book."

"It's a goddamn wonderful book," Hemingway told Miss Beach as he stood to pour more wine all around. "You worry too much about him, Sylvia. You heard what Gertrude said about Joyce and the old woman in San Francisco."

"That is very unfair, Hem," Miss Beach started to say.

"Really?" Hillary noticed that Hemingway was moving in his chair like a man spoiling for a good fight. "Hash and I get to Michaud's once a week at best and the bloody starving Saint Joyce has his whole crew there every night." Hemingway held up a palm. "Not that I begrudge him his right to a decent meal, but let's not get too carried away with all his pain, Sylvia."

"James has his priorities and you have yours," Miss Beach said.

"I guess that's true." Then the glint returned to his eyes. "I just don't have a Miss Weaver financing a goddamn troupe at Michaud's every night."

"I think you spend too much time cultivating the views of Gertrude Stein," Monnier said. She sounded bored with this discussion.

"What about you, Hillary?" Hemingway asked, ignoring Beach's lover and staring at Hillary across the table. "What do you think of the great Joyce?"

"I have no opinion," Hillary said, pushing the words out, trying hard not to feel intimidated. "His book is difficult, but I suppose the things that matter usually are." She

dipped her head and arched her eyebrows at Hemingway in a manner Maria Jolas thought to be a little too provocative. But Maria was wrong. "I do have an opinion about you, Mr. Hemingway." Not a hand moved around the table, and no one blinked.

"Let's hear it," Hemingway said crisply.

"You begrudge another writer some comforts when I think what you begrudge is something else entirely. Maybe talent, maybe something else. And you're rude, although I was told to expect that."

Hemingway laughed. Not a polite laugh or a nervous laugh, but a genuinely amused, hearty laugh, his head thrown back and his teeth showing. Hadley stared at Hillary admiringly. Gene changed the subject to dog racing in Florida. When this didn't seem to interest anyone, Maria started clearing the table and everyone stood. Gene took Hemingway to the other side of the room to show him something. Misses Beach and Monnier talked quietly by the door, apparently waiting for Maria to come out of the kitchen so they could say goodbye. Hadley approached Hillary.

"It was good seeing you again," she told her.

"Thank you. You're not angry with me?" she asked.

"Of course not! Hem should be taken down to the lake and beaten more often."

"Is that how it sounded?"

"Sure, yes. It's all right. Hem's fond of you, I can tell, and not just because you're young and beautiful and American. He likes a good fight. We will see you again soon, Hillary, I know we will." Hemingway joined them from across the room and smiled down at Hillary. "I've got to get to know you better so I can clean your clock as well as you cleaned mine."

Hillary didn't respond. The Hemingways and Misses Beach and Monnier left together. Hillary stood at the door, waiting. Gene came out of the kitchen and joined her. "You think any of them will ever speak to me again?" Hillary asked.

"Are you kidding? You'll be on everyone's list within a week."

"For being rude to your guest?"

"Well . . ." Gene paused and smiled at Hillary. "Let's see. Hem wasn't writing today, apparently, because he had nearly a bottle of wine before you arrived, he said, and another half bottle at lunch, so he was spoiling for a fight. He loves Sylvia and admires Joyce, so he was only baiting her, knowing full well she wouldn't take the hook. He gets a little mean when he drinks, my observation after two months of knowing the fellow. And here you are, the young American ingenue, who in three sentences breaks up a fight brewing between two friends, puts Hem in his place, makes the rascal laugh like I haven't yet seen him laugh, saves my dear wife's luncheon from becoming a disaster, and tells all us writers and booksellers that the hard stuff has merit because it's hard. You were right, dear," Gene said, putting his arm around his wife, "your friend is a jewel."

"Ignore Gene, Hillary, he drank too much wine," Maria said.

"No I didn't," Gene said, and turned to Hillary. "I didn't ask your permission, but I showed Ernest one of your poems."

"I wish you hadn't done that, Gene"

"He liked it very much. If I shouldn't have . . ."

"It's all right. Which was it, the one about the fire in Alexandria?"

"Yes."

"I'm surprised he liked it," Hillary said. "He doesn't strike me as a man who would appreciate verse."

"All writers love good writing."

"I suppose so. It would be good, I think, not to share them with more writer friends."

Maria rapped Gene on the hand. It was a gesture of affectionate disapproval. "He won't, Hill. I promise."

Hillary put on her fur coat and mittens, thanked them both, walked down the three flights of stairs to the vestibule, and went back to her apartment. Her heart was beating fast and she thought the walk would slow it down. Something inside her was bursting and she needed to breathe deeply the cold air, walk fast without thoughts, and get home as quickly as possible. She wrote to Gretchen that she had met a writer from Chicago.

My friend Maria Jolas invited me to lunch today and I met a young writer named Ernest Hemingway. I had already met his wife Hadley. Lunch was like walking into someone else's conversation about people you don't know, but I held my own and only embarrassed myself once.

Mr. Hemingway is compelling. He is about six feet tall, maybe less, has black hair that looks as if he brushed it hastily this morning but not since, a black moustache bushy enough to get wet when he takes a drink, and a powerful but compact body. The backs of his large hands, the most of him I saw during lunch, are covered with fine, black hair. I understand he likes to box and he is athletically built but not the way, say, a runner is built.

Although Mr. Hemingway clearly is enamoured with his wife, he just as clearly likes the ladies in an almost shy kind of way -- he'll stare at one until she looks back, whereupon his eyes dart to some near object as if to suggest he was looking at it, and not her, the whole while.

Hillary and Hemingway did not see each other again until one day in late March

when she was walking in Le Jardin du Luxembourg and saw him standing under a fruit tree, looking up among spindly bare branches as if peering at a lost cat. Sneaking toward him, but not getting too close to be seen, she cupped her hand over her mouth and called out a profanity.

Hemingway's head shot to the right, his eyes immediately catching hers even though she was standing in a crowd of women beneath a statue of St. George. Found out, she walked amiably up to him, bobbed her head, and smiled with a sidelong glance. "Find it?" Hemingway asked her coarsely.

"Find what, Mr. Hemingway?" Hillary asked, mocking adoration.

"Your cat," the man said bluntly. He wants to play, Hillary thought to herself.

"I have no cat, sir," she told him.

"Just a mouth like a whore?" Standing under an apple tree in late Spring, talking to a harmless American girl, Hemingway's stance was a boxer's, erect, rigid, uncompromising.

"Or an innocent girl who has lost her way," Hillary said with affected gentility. "Why don't you buy me a drink, Mr. Hemingway. I'll try to watch my language."

They walked through the gardens, still dormant from the winter cold, to the west end, and then along the rue de Fleurus. The vines behind the iron gate at the entrance to Stein's apartment were green and crimson in the sunlight. At the Boulevard Raspail they turned left and walked the two long blocks to where it met the Boulevard Montparnasse, forming a triangle whose points were Dome, Select, and Rotonde. Hemingway took Hillary's arm and steered her across the wide street to the narrow double doors of Rotonde, pulled up a chair for her at a table by a window, and sat,

exhaling deeply.

"Someone not as polite as me would take advantage of that sense of humor of yours," he told her after ordering two glasses of cheap wine. Hillary noticed the worn-through elbows of his heavy sweater when he leaned toward her. He watched her observe his poverty but chose to ignore it. "I told a friend about you and he wants to meet you. I made a bastardly mistake."

"Who is he?" Hillary asked.

Hemingway told her. "A snake, a real snake. Listen . . ." Hemingway started to say, then stopped. "Just pretend you never heard his name, all right?" Hillary said nothing. "At the races he's a bore, but that's not the least of it."

"What races?"

"At Auteuil, for God's sake. What you don't know . . ."

"Oh please! I'm new to your beloved Paris, remember?"

"It isn't my fucking beloved Paris." At this Hillary's head shot back in a quick gesture. "Oh for God's sake, I'm sorry," Hemingway said quickly.

The writer stared intensely at Hillary for a full minute, as if deciding whether to tell her something. She returned the look without blinking. A casual bystander might have supposed they were locked in an impasse following a fight or trying hard to control deep passions. "Hash likes you," Hemingway finally uttered.

"She's swell."

"Yeah. I should have been insulted when she didn't bridle at my suggestion it would be good to get to know you better. She must sense your reaction to me is benign," Hemingway said matter-of-factly.

"No . . . Hem. Hem? Isn't that what your friends call you?" Hemingway nodded.

"No, you're wrong. Most women are attracted to you and you know it. Hadley only senses I am no threat to her."

"How does a woman make that kind of decision so quickly? The moment you met my wife at Gene Jolas', you concluded you would not go screwing around with her husband and her marriage. Is that right?"

"Yes."

"So how the hell do you come to that conclusion?"

"Feelings hurt?"

"No. God no. I'm just curious."

"I see." Hillary puckered her lips and wrinkled her brow in thought. "I have had some experience with men but not a lot. A woman meets single men and there are no rules, only impulses. A woman meets a married man and depending on the level of attraction and her ethics, something may or may not happen. If something happens she'll think about the wife with jealousy or anger but not with guilt. I think I'm in the majority of women who, when meeting a married man and his wife for the first time together, experience some kind of block. Suddenly there are rules governing the impulses. My aunt tells me that married couples cheat all the time with other people both of them know, but the amoral are indifferent to rules. Hadley knew I wasn't a threat to her marriage, not even if you were interested in me."

"I wasn't. I'm not."

"Good Lord, I wasn't suggesting you were . . . are . . ." Hillary smiled. "I am only trying to tell you I understand why a man would be offended by a wife's seeming

indifference to his possible interest in another woman."

"Thanks," Hemingway said. His tone was sarcastic, but when Hillary looked up at him, he smiled. Neither spoke while the waiter came with fresh glasses of the cheap wine. "How long will you be in Europe?" he asked.

"Indefinitely."

"What are you doing here? I mean, to what purpose?"

"Only my pleasure."

"You talk like a goddam sphinx. Can't you give a straight answer to a simple question?" Hemingway softened his tone slightly. "What's the game? You're a poet, is that it?"

"No. I'm doing nothing. My purpose is the pleasure of forming and developing relationships with people. That's all."

"A young Gertrude Stein."

"Well, yes, I suppose. But she has real talent and I don't. But, unlike Miss Stein, I have a definite preference for men. I do admire the way Miss Stein surrounds herself with creative people and derives pleasure from it."

"She's more than just a social hostess."

"You're right, of course. By comparison, my life must seem meaningless."

"Oh for God's sake," Hemingway said derisively. "I wasn't passing judgment on you. I think you're smart and beautiful. Better yet, you write damned good poetry. You might do something with that, with your life."

"Hadley is smart and pretty. What is she going to do with her life?"

It took a moment for the question to sink in but when it did, Hemingway smiled

broadly. "You're more clever than I thought," he told her. He clasped his hands on the lacquered surface of the small round table, and she noticed again the thick black hair on the backs of his fingers and hands. "You're right, of course. If you were an old lesbian or a married woman, no one would expect anything of you because you would be in the other category. But I put you in the same category I put myself, and since I plan to do more than devote myself to another person I expect you to do the same."

"I assure you I will not devote myself to another person."

"I wouldn't have dared to go that far," the writer said sarcastically. "Anyway, Hash wants to be a wife and mother. The wife part isn't much, I'll grant you, but the mother part is goddam important." He looked out the window at a pretty girl passing by. "If you want children," he added wistfully.

"Don't you?" Hillary asked.

"I'm ambivalent. As long as it doesn't get in the way, sure I want kids. How about you?"

Hillary shuddered. "No. No children for me. I can't contemplate the responsibility of being a wife, so assuming it for a new little life seems reckless, don't you think?" They fell silent and Hillary drank more wine. She changed the subject. "What do you write?"

"Don't you know?"

At first she thought the question sprang from Hemingway's ego, but she caught on that he was only implying that with her growing network of artistic friends she should certainly know. She smiled. "People talk to me about you but not about what you do. It is as if you are an icon for certain manly qualities more than anything else."

"That won't last." It was stated as a fact, not a prediction. "I write short stories, good ones. But I know I have to do the long one, a novel, and I don't like the way I feel about doing that."

"Why?"

"Because everything one writes is about life, one's own or somebody else's. All my stuff has been collections of scenes with a central idea. Short stories. The long one is about a wounded soldier who falls in love during the war."

"That sounds very romantic."

Hemingway smiled. "All my stuff is romantic, Hillary. Until I finish it, I'll work on my image."

"Meaning?"

"I'm a tough guy."

"Yes, I've noticed."

"Yet you never back up a step, do you?" He was smiling at her.

"An interesting way to put it," Hillary said. "I should be demure and look up at you with glistening eyes and a rapidly beating heart?"

"I'm good at reading people. No, not you." He looked at her. "What gets your heart beating rapidly?" he asked. "Poetry?"

"Oh no, that calms it down, quiets the spirit." He wants to know something about me for his card catalogue, not because he's testing my fidelity to Hadley, she thought to herself. Hillary's intuition told her Hemingway's "long one" about the soldier during the war would be autobiographical, and she wondered whether her looks, or the color of her hair, or the figure of a mysterious young poetess would appear in a Hemingway story.

To be a tragic figure in a great novel would be a far more interesting legacy than a couple dozen poems passed among friends in Montparnasse.

"Nothing to add?" he asked.

"Not now. Not yet."

When Hillary walked home an hour later, she thought Hemingway had found her desirable. She wasn't disappointed by his reaction to her, however, having already concluded that theirs would be a close relationship that could never remain close if they crossed over the line from embryonic bond to the other, more fleeting kind of intimacy. What she had told him about Hadley and intuition was pure invention, and Hillary was dumbfounded that he never questioned it. She wrote that evening to Herbert Walker:

March 28, 1923

Dear Herb:

You should inquire about a man named Ernest Hemingway. He is an American writer living in Paris, is married, poor, and affects a mean spirit he belies the moment he lets down his guard. More on him later.

I received a letter from your sister two weeks ago. She said you are going to dominate the publishing business before you're thirty, of which I have no doubt. Mary doesn't seem happy, and I hope this isn't just a secret wish for her to fulfill my prophecy that marrying Derek would be a mistake. I knew Derek in college before he met Mary. Transformations of character don't happen so fast. Then when I received a letter from Daddy saying that Derek's father's business was in serious trouble, it all came together for me. Mary is not the prettiest girl, and that is quite important to the lot, but he couldn't have married her for her money because his family had so much. Unless, of course, Derek knew about the problems in the family business and decided to embark on a preemptive strategy of self-survival. I'm terrible, I know, but you know I love Mary as much as you do. Please respond and tell me how she is.

This man Hemingway, I am told, has talent. He is a short

story writer who has plans for a novel, a love story set during the war. I haven't read anything of his (and would not be qualified to judge it if I had) but others who do know great writing from mere writing tell me he has real talent. I spent the better part of the afternoon with him today and, although the subject didn't come up, I suspect he has trouble finding someone to publish his stories. He is a large, handsome man with a charismatic quality I have not seen before, even though I have met what I understand from Gertrude Stein to be the very best of this generation of artists. I assure you my motive in writing on his behalf is not borne of a romantic interest in the man. We're pals.

Herb, when you do write back, explain something to me. Why is the ego of the true artist all bravado? What I mean is, the men and women I have met here are so in need of reassurance, praise, and the like, despite what appears to be such a lofty opinion of themselves. And they're usually sad as well beneath all that bravado. Hemingway's egotism is as manifest as anybody's, but one wouldn't have to scratch the surface very hard to find a frightened little boy worried about his worth, ambivalent about relationships, and lonely to the core. Explain it to me if you can, Herb.

I love Paris and can't imagine returning to "our" society, daddy's values, and the Dereks of this world. The Dereks of Paris seem unabashed in their pride at being ruthless. Sort of the difference between a hypocritical Catholic and an honest atheist. Write soon.

Love to all --

Hillary M.

Hillary went to sleep that night turning the conversation with Hemingway over and over in her mind. She decided she had not postured with him after all. Her life would be as she described it to him, and far richer than his cynicism would allow.

CHAPTER 6

I fell in love with Hillary Malone when I was eighteen years old and Hillary was twenty-four. She did not take me very seriously when I told her how I felt, but the deft way she handled my avowal, the gentleness with which she ministered to my suffering, was wondrously compassionate. On the afternoon I met her I was going into Le Clique, a bistro one block from Rotonde owned by Jean Claude Gillarme, an acquaintance of a friend. My friend told me about the place a month earlier, describing it as a happy haunt with good food, cheap wine, and a young crowd. The Fall afternoon I met Hillary was sunny and warm, and most Parisians were at home with the windows open unexpectedly late in the year, or in the park with their wives, children, or lovers. Entering the restaurant, I waved to Jean Claude, who was standing in the narrow doorway to the kitchen, walked past the bar, and turned right into the small dining room. The room was a glassed-in porch, with windows to the rear looking out upon a small but lush garden, and those in front affording the patrons a view of the busy Paris street from which the restaurant drew its evening crowd.

It was only three o'clock in the afternoon and I expected to be alone to eat a late lunch. Instead, I found myself staring at Hillary Malone, seated at a table by the back window, reading a book by the afternoon light. Her chestnut hair was pulled back haphazardly and the loose strands at her temples signaled something different from haste or indifference in making up her hair that morning. It was more like freedom from convention.

She finished a paragraph and looked up at me on the other side of the small room. "Am I in the way?" she asked me in French. She clearly thought I was a waiter

or busboy.

I told her no in English, adding that I was a student looking for something to eat and knowing that Gillarme would accommodate me at that hour. "Would you like to be alone to finish your book? I can eat at the bar," I told her. Her book was closed on a finger, not much more than a dozen pages from the back cover.

Hillary removed the finger marking her place, inserted a cloth bookmark, and laid the book on the table. "No," she said, "Why don't you join me? I'm not hungry but we can talk while you eat." As if on cue the waiter came into the room and took my order of soup, bread, and wine, and Hillary's for more espresso. I couldn't take my eyes from her but tried not to show it. I felt suddenly embarrassed by my soiled gray sweater, scrub pants, and unkempt hair. Hillary sat calmly as I fidgeted with these concerns. She was quite beautiful, and even more sensual.

"You're a student at the university?" she asked. I told her I was there for one year, concentrating in politics and economics, that I would graduate from Columbia in a year, and planned to go into journalism. I asked her if she was a student. The look that would become so familiar to me crossed her face -- the slight smile and faint dimples, flared nostrils, and lively eyes -- but she said nothing.

"You are a rich American girl in Paris for adventure," I offered insincerely, thinking it would amuse her.

"However did you guess?" she asked me, the smile gone but the eyes still intense.

"Obvious," I said, assuming her answer was as disingenuous as my question. "You speak perfect English, dress too well, and are reading . . . what is it you're

reading?" I asked.

"*Dark Laughter* by a man named Anderson," Hillary said. "I was in Sylvia Beach's bookstore and a friend of hers recommended it to me," she said as though I should know who Beach was.

"Is it any good?" I asked.

"No, not really," she said, "But there are people in Paris I know whose opinions matter to me, and so when one of them tells me to read something, or meet someone, I usually abide." She looked up at my disapproving scowl. "But I make up my own mind about what I like."

I ate my soup and bread and drank the tannic wine in silence. I could tell that Hillary was fighting an internal battle of some kind, curling her lip and squinting slightly. Finally she asked me a question. "You are a bit smug in your disapproval of what I just said, aren't you?" I started to say something but my mouth was full of bread and she cut me off. "You listen to people lecture and dutifully take notes, I'm sure. And they tell you to read books you judge to be tripe when you finish them." I had swallowed and tried to interrupt but she didn't want me to answer just yet. "You do all this because you are learning, and it is because you are learning that you must indulge others, digest a lot of nonsense, have the wisdom to know that real education is separating out the truth. Am I right?"

I had finished the soup. Only a crust of bread remained on the edge of the plate. Although Hillary looked at me with a questioning expression I didn't answer her. "I wasn't being critical. Really," I told her. I changed the subject. "Tell me about you. Why are you in Paris?"

"Paris is a magical city," she told me.

"Paris is a cruel place," I countered.

"Do you really think so? Someone else I know said as much." Changing the subject herself, or so I thought, she asked, "And how old are you?"

"I'll tell you my age when you tell me your name." She told me. "Irish American," I guessed.

"Very good. And yours?" I told her. "Swedish American?"

"Yes. Uncle Gunnar came home every Sunday morning on the back of the milk wagon, and the family, lined up on the porch ready to walk to church, watched him fall off onto the road and stagger into the house to sleep it off while we prayed for him."

"A poor family?"

"Not really. My father was an immigrant who made a lot of money in Chicago. Enough to send me to Columbia and give me a tolerable allowance while I'm in France. What are you doing here?" I asked her again.

"I was serious. I'm a very spoiled rich American girl who is here looking for adventures."

"What kind of adventures?" I asked, feeling a tingle at the top of my spine. Although she had started our conversation aggressively, almost rudely, my attraction to her intensified. Hillary's sensuality was indescribable.

"Oh. . . I'm going to hunt down all of the great men in Paris, at least the ones who will be great, and ravish them. I go to Gertrude Stein's every Saturday. I know Aragon. I let Picasso seduce me. I would be working on Hemingway, but we're just friends."

I looked at her with a puzzled frown. I knew the name Picasso, of course, and

Gertrude Stein was vaguely familiar, but the others were just names. Of course I didn't believe a word of it, and assumed that this fantasy was designed to put distance between us by casting herself as much older and experienced. "What if I told you I will be a great man?" I asked her, proud that while saying it I looked directly at her and not past her at the garden, as my innate shyness wanted me to.

Hillary emptied her demitasse and smiled warmly at me. "If you're still in Paris then I'll just have to track you down," she said.

"*Then*," I said, a declaration, not a question.

"Then," Hillary responded resolutely.

After a short silence I smiled back at her. "Now that that's settled, would you like to go to a play with me Tuesday evening at the University?"

"I'd like that."

"Where do I call on you?"

"I'll meet you there," Hillary said. She said it in a way that did not suggest she was reluctant for me to know where she lived or to see the inside of her apartment. Looking out the window, I hoped I was right. The light in the garden had changed, sunshine replaced by cool shade. I stood up to leave but Hillary remained in her chair. I gave her directions to the theater and told her that on Tuesday I would be properly dressed and my hair would be neatly combed. Hillary shrugged, and told me she looked forward to visiting the University and seeing a play, that she had experienced no "culture" since arriving in France. Among many other thoughts fighting for my attention as I walked back to the suite of rooms I shared with two other students was the question: could I get through to her? I regretted making clear so soon my interest in

her as a man and not as a friend, thus providing her with the opportunity to reject my query before I had a chance to elaborate my substance and give it credible support.

I planned and schemed. My strategy to get close to Hillary Malone changed a dozen times over the three days between our first meeting and the approaching evening play. For me, Paris had not been monastic, and my experiences with half a dozen women, from students to one middle-aged professor at the University, buttressed my confidence that I had a lot to offer as a lover. Yet, anticipating intimacy with Hillary was different, even frightening, and that was something I could not explain to myself. I was slightly stocky but well built, with light brown hair and dark blue eyes. Women were usually attracted to me. I feared Hillary was not.

Tuesday evening, she was only ten minutes late and we got to our seats a few minutes before the curtain rose on the Moliere comedy. I introduced her to some friends sitting near us and enjoyed the expressions of envy on their faces. Throughout the play I allowed myself sidelong glances at her but she ignored me and looked straight ahead, at the stage, no matter how long the staring continued. Her eyelashes were very long and in profile her nose was more pointed than I remembered. Her breasts, naked underneath a silk blouse, were round and full, above a waist that could not have been more than twenty inches around.

The play was funny and Hillary laughed freely, turning to me occasionally to see if I was enjoying it as much as she was. When the curtain came down and everyone stood up to leave, Hillary remained seated. Having gotten up with everyone else, I sat down again.

“Are you all right?” I asked.

"I'm fine. Really. I just deplore standing in lines. Would you mind if we waited here until the aisles clear?"

I was disappointed because I wanted to introduce her to more people. I wanted to display her, to prolong the evening. If everyone was gone when we entered the theatre lobby, she might well say goodbye and walk home.

"Did you enjoy the play?"

"Very much. I had forgotten how awfully funny his plays are."

"Do you get to the theatre much back in Boston?"

"I haven't really lived in Boston since I was seventeen, and I had no appreciation then for theatre or art or culture. Except poetry, that is."

"Who is your favorite poet?"

Hillary didn't answer my question. She turned in her seat and looked toward the back of the theatre. Apparently, the line had gone, for she stood up. "How about a trade?" she asked. "You walk me home, and I'll give you some wine. We can talk there."

After the laughter and the noisy crowd, the atmosphere in the theater had become cool and quiet. So was Hillary. A short while later, as we walked along the sidewalk, damp but not wet from a light rain earlier in the evening, Hillary started to talk about herself. She was no longer posturing or working at being clever.

"My mother is a dutiful wife, and my father is a wealthy man whose sole purpose in life is to accumulate as much as he can so that he can look back and say he was better than them all."

"Them all?"

“Yes. Both his family and all the WASPs whom he both idolizes and despises.”

“Because he can never be one of them no matter how closely he can match their money?”

“Precisely. He also is a bigot. My friend Sophie is Jewish and when daddy found that out, I could see he didn’t like it. But he didn’t say anything.”

“I have the feeling it gave you some pleasure to flaunt his prejudice.”

Hillary stopped walking and turned to face me. She bobbed her head in an odd way and smiled, showing her white teeth. “That was very clever,” she said, and resumed walking.

I ignored the compliment. “Who’s the most interesting person you’ve met here?” I asked.

“Ernest Hemingway,” she responded without hesitation. “A writer.”

“What makes him so interesting?” I asked.

“Oh, he has a way about him. Broad and dark and handsome, sure. But it’s more than that. He has a magnetic quality that is rare in people. He dominates when he’s in a room without saying a word.”

The impression I got was that Hemingway was comparable to a young woman’s larger-than-life, attractive uncle, sexually compelling but near enough in the bloodline to be taboo. Or maybe he was someone she loved or wanted to love. I listened. Although my attraction to her was palpable, an inner voice told me that falling in love with her would be an utter waste of time. After we entered her apartment she asked me to get comfortable and disappeared. She came back a few minutes later with a teapot, cups and saucers, a bottle of wine, and two glasses.

"Wine or tea?" she asked. I told her I would have a glass of the wine and maybe then try the tea. She poured two glasses of wine and sat on a rocking chair next to the overstuffed one in which I was sitting. "So, do you like French women?"

"No more or less than American women."

"What? We're all the same?"

"Hardly. But the differences don't appear to be based on nationality."

She changed the subject. "How is your relationship with your parents?"

"My mother died two years ago. A 'disease of the blood' they called it." I noticed Hillary's immediate response. A blink would have caused a tear, but she just stared at me. "My father is a wonderful man with whom I cannot communicate. But it is better this year than last, and I think we're approaching a common ground. Slowly."

"And your profession, when you leave school?"

"Journalism," I said proudly.

Hillary frowned. Not knowing that Hillary's writer friend was a wire correspondent for an American paper who did "that" only to make money to support worthier endeavors, I could not understand her abhorrence for the profession I had chosen. "You want to write about events, things, facts." Her tone was sharp and unforgiving.

"And that is so bad?" I asked. "Journalists create the record. They are the grist for the historian's mill."

"There is so much more," Hillary said wistfully.

"Such as . . . ?"

"Invention and magic, and a refusal to make everything ordinary."

"I'm sorry," I told her. "I want to make the complexity of the world we live in

ordinary, to explain it, analyze it, perhaps even find some succor from its cruel twists."

"You're hopelessly stuck on the here and now."

"Really?" I asked. "It seems to me you are far more 'here and now' than I'll ever be."

"No. I'm looking forward. It's what's ahead of me, not the shadow at my feet at day's end, that fascinates me. That's not you."

"I couldn't disagree more. I think I know what you mean, but to want to be a recorder of history rather than one of its architects is not ignoble."

"I didn't say it was ignoble. I just think there is more."

"Not within my grasp," I told her.

"Nor mine, I fear," she said sadly.

"So maybe we're not such dissimilar creatures."

"No . . . I think we are."

"What is it exactly, Hillary. What is it you're looking for?"

"I won't have a baby, nothing like that, so I want to impress my personality, my thoughts, my perspective, on the world in other ways. I want to be a meaningful part of meaningful lives. Is that so bad?"

"Of course not. Let's see . . ." I shook my head. "You want impact on the world through impact on those who shape it, without putting your own hands on the potter's wheel?"

"Yes, that's it, impact. But if I touch the potter and he touches the world. . ."

"And the best way to do that is by developing relationships with men who will have that effect on the world?" I asked her.

"I don't like the way that sounds. I once thought I had a talent. Apparently, there are people who still think I do. But I don't. When one loses that self-confidence, it doesn't matter much what others think." Hillary got up and went to the bathroom. I listened to the tank empty into the bowl, heard water running, and watched as she came back into the room with a confident stride. She sat down in the rocking chair and we said nothing to each other for quite awhile.

"Why did you ignore me staring at you tonight?" I asked her.

"What was I supposed to do?"

"Tell me to stop."

"Why on earth should I have done that?" she asked.

"Because it was rude," I told her.

She poured tea. She hadn't touched the wine. "I didn't think it was rude. I was flattered." Seeing my pained expression, she showed me a palm. "Look, I want to be friends. I saw you watching me. You are a good looking college student in France who has stumbled upon an older woman with whom he would like to become intimate. You are here for a year. I am here for the rest of my life." I had tried to interrupt her but she looked crossly at me and I shut my mouth. We began a pattern -- Hillary dominating our conversations -- that continued for decades. "I don't want to become involved with anyone for whom a future with me might become important. I want to be your friend," she repeated, and got up, walked to the other side of the room, and turned to face me. Her lips were compressed and she pointed a straightened finger at me. "Whatever else you want you will have to bury. Do you want to be my friend?"

"What if I told you I was falling in love with you?" I asked her.

"Already? My goodness. I would say you are more impetuous than I thought."

"But I could be," I told her. "How long must you know a person to know that?"

"About ten seconds," she responded immediately. "I suspect it will happen to you often. It probably has already."

"It is happening now. With you. But you won't take it seriously."

"I do, you know. I take you seriously. But you could offer me riches beyond imagination and I would be no more interested."

Hillary walked over to my chair, sat on the arm, bent down, and kissed me. It was a long, tender kiss that seemed utterly contrary to what she had just said. I wanted her, but she didn't want me. But if she didn't, why would she kiss me that way? I reached a hand around her waist and started to pull her toward me, but she unwrapped my hand and stood up. "I would love to give you what you want, but I won't. Please go now." She stood up, walked to the open door which led to her bedroom, entered, and closed the door behind her.

I was alone. My heart ached. I scoured my memory to see if there had been any other way to end the conversation. There wasn't. Hillary was somewhere else, playing a role I thought was ridiculously naive. My certainty, the concrete quality of my plans, was incomprehensible to her.

I left Hillary's apartment after taking the tray to the kitchen. I looked at the closed door behind which she stood, or sat, or lay, and indulged my self-pity for having come so close to Hillary Malone without even tempting her interest. A note was in my mail three days later.

Dear _____:

Thank you for the play. I enjoyed it so much. I rejected the idea of getting involved with you but then briefly reconsidered. Thus the kiss before you left. I am sorry. I like you but I don't want you.

Hillary Malone

I saw her two more times that fall. Each time our talk became more intimate, but we did not. Hillary taught me about perfect love, and it grew no less perfect over time. Love is only perfect when it is pure and unspoiled, and never after the desire for it is realized. "Wanting," Hillary said to me years later, "is so much more pleasurable than having." The year I studied at the Sorbonne, the year I met Hillary Malone, traced a ghost-like image in front of me that embodied only the most brilliant characteristics of my perfect woman, and Hillary provided the raw material. Although many of my friends criticized me for not "moving past" what they perceived to be an infatuation with her, they never understood that it was my vision, and not Hillary, that was unattainable. As I wrote to her after the war: "When you walk with your eyes constantly fixed two inches above the horizon, and the horizon is your destiny, you can walk forever and never arrive." In the area of my relationships with women Hillary did not represent the "ideal" woman I once loved who made other relationships doomed from the start. Rather, she was that image on the horizon, constantly beckoning to me, always out of reach as I appeared to move closer and closer to it. If we had slept together it might have been unsatisfying. If we married, we might have fought constantly, filling the relationship with petty resentments and disappointments. My perfect love, originally conceived that fall and winter in Paris and later embellished over and over again in my imagination, was never found. But I never regretted it. Having never allowed anyone to play the role, I

have never had to compromise the vision, like so many of my fellow men do day after month after year.

CHAPTER SEVEN

It was nearly two years before Hillary spent more time with her friend Hemingway. It was an eventful period for them both. Hadley had given birth to Hemingway's first child, nicknamed "Bumby." Before that, while leaving Paris by train to join Hemingway in Lausanne, Hadley lost a valise in which he had placed the original manuscripts of nearly all of his early short stories. He had made no copies. Although Hemingway later described the execrable pain of that experience, and the doubt it would forever cast on his relationship with Hadley, at the time he mentioned the incident to few of his friends. There has been much speculation about the impact the incident had on their marriage, but Hillary always thought it was merely an excuse for abandoning something with which he was already finished. She was certain he was only waiting for the substitute from whose shore he could cast the next stone.

Hillary filled those nearly twenty-three months with on again, off again, relationships with a number of men, most of whom she met at rue de Fleurus. One of them, Raymond Guerre, a well regarded Paris art dealer from whom Miss Stein bought pictures, fell passionately in love with her. Despite Hillary's repeated disavowals of any interest in a future with him, he left his wife and small child to pursue her. Whichever of Raymond's qualities aroused Hillary's primitive passions, his business gave birth to a purpose quite different from the one Hemingway had asked her to pursue. It began as she listened to Raymond's conversations with Miss Stein on Saturday afternoons at the beginning of their affair. These conversations always focused on Stein's remarkable private collection of paintings, and aroused in Hillary a nascent, and at that time completely intuitive, appreciation for art. Hillary's interest in art had no empirical

foundation. She learned little about it in college and was self-taught in only the most elementary way in her Louvre tours. But when she started to spend a lot of time at Raymond's gallery, her interest accelerated, and three months later, when she visited the Louvre again after a two year absence, it exploded. She devoted almost a full year to the Louvre, breaking it down by art form, period, and artist, and in between visits studied at the library. She returned again and again to the museum, long days that often lasted from the moment the doors opened until a guard shooed her out in the evening. Hillary's education in painting, at first purely intellectual, became emotional and tactile.

February 8, 1924

Dear _____:

I was happy to have your two recent letters. It certainly seems to me you are climbing the journalism ladder very quickly.

I am studying art in a serious way and poking myself every once in a while for not paying attention to that area of the college catalogues. I stare with wonder at the pre-pubescent girl by Mary Cassatt, Degas' Absinthe and his Arabesque, and the woman stooped over the shallow tub. That is only the beginning -- there is Manet's Argenteuil or Balcony or Olympia, or Monet's Poppies and Hoar-Frost, Berthe Morisot's La Berceau, Pissaro's La Moisson a Montfoucault, Potages Arbres en Fleur, or the wonderful, crowded confusion of Renoir's Le Moulin de la Galette.

The study must end and then I will paint. I fear it more than I can say, yet a voice whispers in my ear that I can do it, that it is not coincidental that I look at the Manet and it says "you would have changed that soft pink to a champagne mauve, wouldn't you?" or "that shadow is too shallow." How terribly arrogant that sounds coming from a girl who has never held a brush. Don't you agree? But I don't care. I love it and want to love it from the inside looking out, not the other way around.

I can read your mind as you read this letter. You would have me write more poems, not paint pictures. I have heard that from others, especially Gertrude Stein. It isn't that I don't think my poems are as good

as some find them. Rather, it's that I have put that away, like an old love with whom I cannot reunite. Maybe one day . . .

All the best,

Hill

In March 1924 Hemingway spent his mornings and afternoons at the Closerie des Lilas bistro. He could write there at one of the large tables in the front room without being bothered. In the mornings the light from the casement windows in front was a perfect pink-orange. Since lunch was not served at des Lilas, he could write until well into the afternoon. One morning, shortly after he arrived at des Lilas and layed his notebook out on the broad table by a window where he always sat, Hillary walked in the front door. She happened to see him through that window on her regular morning walk which on this day took a slightly different route. They had seen each other only briefly during the preceding year and a half, on the street, at Shakespeare and Company, or at Stein's apartment. As she walked over to his table, Hemingway remarked to himself once again how extraordinarily beautiful she was, but to her he only said gruffly "Sit down. Want some coffee?"

"I'm disturbing you," she said apologetically, trying not to stare at the notebook in which Hemingway had been writing. He told her he was ready for a break anyway. "And how have you been, anyway?" he asked.

Hillary knew he would not want to hear about her lovers, such as the art dealer still trying to see her months after she told him to go back to his wife. Hem was no prude when it came to permissible behavior among men, but she thought he viewed the morality of women differently. Men merely spat; women tasted.

"I am in love with painting," she said tentatively. Hemingway just nodded, waiting for her to complete the thought. "It surges inside me, Hem. Like a passion. I am beginning to think my purpose has something to do with painting, or painters."

"Painters, sure. Have you tried it? Or enlisted the help of a teacher?"

"No. Not yet. I am still afraid."

"Anything worthwhile makes one afraid."

"I suppose." Hillary became quiet, emotional. "Where have you been, Hem? What happened to friendship?" She hated the moisture in her eyes and clenched her teeth to prevent tears from forming. Hemingway noticed this and looked down at his clasped hands.

"I read one of your poems, at Gene Jolas'," Hemingway said. His tone was gentler. "If it was at all representative . . ."

"Thanks Hem, but I'm finished with that. Maybe it's like moving on from short stories to novels."

"I'll never stop writing stories," he said.

Hillary bit her lip. "Of course. Maybe I'll go back to them one day. For now it's a closed door."

"Why only one thing at a time?" he asked. "There was Rossetti."

"Dante Gabriel Rossetti?" Hemingway nodded. "He did *Mary Magdalene at the House of Simon the Pharisee*, a wonderful painting," she said, remembering an exhibit she had seen with Raymond.

"You know nothing else about Rossetti?"

"Such as?"

"Hillary, he was a poet *and* a painter. Not one, then the other, but both throughout his life. I'm not a devotee of poetry, but when Gertrude told me of your new interest I immediately thought of Rossetti. He wrote *The Portrait* and *The Blessed Damozel* eighty years ago and they are considered every bit as good as his paintings."

"Thanks. I'm no Rossetti."

Hemingway changed the subject. He told her about his trip to Toronto, Bumby's birth, his ambivalence about fatherhood and his marriage. His candor was new. "Gertrude thinks I ought to go to Spain," he said offhandedly. The way he bounced from one thought to another showed how troubled he was. She reminded him of the first time they met, at the Jolas', and Hemingway laughed.

"That was three months after we came over. Young love and poverty and all the rest," he said, waving it away with his hand. "Soon after we got here in December I met Galantiere. I took him back to my place to fight. He was very neat about it, holding one string with his teeth while he held the knot with a finger to make sure his gloves were tight. He was pathetic. The first time I knocked him down he had some blood on his lip and looked up at me, blinking, as if to ask how he had gotten there. Great good sport, Galantiere. He took us to Michaud's for dinner and bought three bottles of champagne."

"You like to fight."

"Love it. Greek sport, one on one, no bullshit. One man is stronger and more agile than the other." Hillary curled her upper lip. "Funny, is it?" he asked.

"How could I say?" Hillary asked. There was a gleam in her eyes. "I've never seen boxing. I've never tried it."

"Of course you haven't. It's not for ladies."

"Why not?"

"Don't be ridiculous. You know 'why not.'"

"I'd like to try boxing," Hillary said. Involuntarily, she made two fists and rested them on the table.

"Don't be ridiculous," Hemingway repeated. But then he smiled. "Where do you live?"

"Five blocks from here."

Hillary sat and watched while he neatly put loose pages in his chapbook, stuck several short pencils in his jacket pocket, and exchanged a few words with Jacques Minot, Closerie des Lilas' owner, in the doorway to a back room. They walked quickly to Hillary's flat against a cold wind.

Hemingway looked appreciatively around the room. "It's a bit sparse," he said, "but these are fine things you have."

Hillary brought wine from the kitchen, and cheese and a baguette. Hemingway sat and sliced the bread very quickly, then the cheese. Although starved, he sat back and waited for Hillary to take a small piece of cheese before he took one, then another, and another, washing them down with healthy gulps of the cold white wine. He refilled his glass and sat back.

"Have you ever been to the southwest? Arizona . . . New Mexico?" she asked.

"No. I grew up in Chicago. I don't know why, it's so contrary to my nature, but I always thought about going east and north, not south and west. But there was always Michigan. The U.P."

Hillary finished her wine and set her glass down. "It is such a purely physical

place," she told him. "The land is severe, hard on people, and those who live there constantly work at getting to a level of comfort we wake to every day."

"Some of us," Hemingway said.

"No. The things I'm talking about? No, all of us." Hillary leaned forward in her chair, noticing Hemingway observe her breasts where her blouse opened. "You may often be hungry, but the food is there but for a few francs. In New Mexico it isn't there at all unless you grow it. It's a hostile environment even for that, and so it seems so physical to me." She paused. "Like you."

"Meaning?" Hemingway frowned, wondering if Hillary was making a joke at his expense.

"Just that you are a very physical man. I don't mean just your physique, although that's certainly part of it. It's the boxing, the love of sport, man against man, man against animals."

"Man against woman?" Hemingway smiled.

"I'll never know, huh?"

"No, we're pals."

"Yes, of course. Just how did we decide that?"

"It happens the first five minutes a man and woman are together. You decided that in our case, remember? Anyway, a man puts a woman into one of three categories."

"I'm in the 'pal' category. What are the others?"

"Well," Hemingway leaned back and clasped his hands behind his head, "the second category is women a man wants to fuck and thinks he might someday." He

watched Hillary take this without flinching, unlike the way she reacted to his profanity two years earlier.

"So, we have the 'pal' category and the 'whore' category. And the third?"

"Ah! That is the most problematic. It is for women you simultaneously want to put on a pedestal and worship *and* who you want to fuck. The conflict is agonizing."

"Why should there be a conflict?" Hillary asked.

"Doing vile things with a saint gives some men pause," he replied.

"I see," Hillary said, "it's incest."

"That's it exactly," Hemingway said, moving forward in his chair. "It's the last category of women from which a man selects his wife, and usually the first one he meets."

"Like Hadley?"

"Like Hadley."

"Except that there have been others since her in the same category." Her statement, not phrased as a question, visibly unsettled him.

"Why do you say that?"

Hillary ignored him and stood up, looking around the room as if taking in its dimensions. "Show me what boxers do."

Hemingway remained in his chair, hands behind his head, leaning back. "Don't be absurd," he told her scornfully.

"Come on, papa," she said, holding up two small fists.

Hemingway, startled, sprang forward in his chair. "Who suggested you call me that?" he asked.

Hillary's hands dropped to her sides and she gave him a perplexed look. "No one really. It just seemed right." She walked over and looked down at him. "Why? Does it annoy you?"

"No, it doesn't"

"Then . . ."

"Well, I like it, but no one knows that. Not even Hash."

"No one?"

"Well, Bumby knows."

"Of course . . ." Hillary said quietly, and then walked back to the center of the room. "Show me boxing," she demanded again.

Hemingway got up and walked toward her with an odd expression on his face, as though humoring her impulse was beneath him. He crouched a bit, his knees bent, and began bouncing lightly, on his toes, arms to his sides. Then he raised his hands and made fists, the left one thrust forward, the right held back nearly against his chest. Hillary stood still, looking confused.

"You have to move around," he said, his breathing becoming more labored as he moved. "The idea is to begin with the jab, with the left fist," and he showed her what he meant, "and to punch with the right," and he began to jab the air repeatedly with his left, clenched fist. Then, spinning a quarter turn to his left, he slammed his imaginary opponent with his right fist. Then he stopped, stood perfectly still, and turned to Hillary. "Want to try it?"

"You bet," Hillary said determinedly, walking toward him.

"Now, try to do what I did," Hemingway said condescendingly, "and I'll follow

you." He held out the palms of his hands to her. "Punch my hands as you move."

Hillary began to bounce on her feet, at first with too much spring, but in a few moments she was in the exact rhythm he had shown her, and she danced toward him with fists held in the proper position. He sprang into motion opposite her, holding out his flat palms, the right one forward, the left held back.

All went well. Hillary made him work. She also made him smile when her small fists pounded his palms much harder than he expected. They were both perspiring. Hemingway, assuming for some reason that Hillary had had enough, caught one of her jabs to his right hand and held it, while Hillary, not noticing that Hemingway's left hand had fallen to his side, sent her right fist forcefully into his mouth. She stepped back, stunned.

Hemingway reeled backward, and when he had a sure footing put his hand to his left cheek, wincing. When he pulled the hand away he saw a smear of blood across his thumb, then looked away from Hillary to test again for blood, found more, and turned back to her.

She could see his split lip, the look in his eyes, not rage or anger but dumbfounded disbelief. "My God," he said in French.

"Oh dear," Hillary said with genuine concern. "Look what I've done."

He refused her offer of an astringent and a bandage, giving her a mean look when she asked him again if he didn't want some sort of medication. He merely went into the bathroom, washed his face, and came out after a few minutes with a moistened washcloth pressed to the side of his mouth. Hillary handed him a glass of wine.

"Let's talk about this," he said, looking hard at her.

Hillary's embarrassment had by then yielded to full appreciation of the humor of the situation and she looked at him with a serious expression of the sort one puts on when trying desperately to hold back laughter. "All right," she said.

"Of course it was an accident . . . " Hemingway started to say.

"My God, of course. You put your hand down for some reason."

"I thought you were tired."

"But you should have said 'stop' or something, shouldn't you?" It was becoming harder for her to hold back the laughter.

"Yes, I suppose, but what I mean is it wasn't even a lucky punch," he said.

"Lucky punch?" Hillary asked sweetly.

"Goddamit!" he roared at her. "You know what I mean!"

Hillary's composure broke. No mere giggle, her laugh was guttural and deep. Hemingway just sat and frowned at her until she stopped and began to wipe tears from her eyes.

"I should have expected this," he said, leaning toward her upright figure from his chair, his elbows on his knees, his hands clenched again.

"I'm sorry. . . " Hillary began, but checked herself when she saw the look on his face. "Really," she said, "what can I do to make it up to you? Does it hurt much?"

"Only my pride. Isn't that what a man is supposed to say in a situation like this? There is something you could do."

"Anything. Anything."

"Don't ever mention this to a living soul."

"Well, I don't know . . ."

"What a damned foolish thing to ask," Hemingway said through his teeth.

"Now, Hem. You don't honestly think I'd tell anyone that Hemingway, the boxing aficionado and all around tough guy, got his lip cut open by the tender little fist of a jejune young woman in a boxing match in her apartment, do you?"

"It wasn't a 'boxing match'," he said quietly. "Anyway, you won't say anything?"

"I'm taking this to my grave."

"The temptation won't overcome you?"

"Never. A secret between pals . . . forever," Hillary said earnestly.

March 21, 1924

Dear _____:

The crowd would have roared! Oh you have no idea. Mr. Hemingway taught me a skill and I bested him at it. The mere thought I could be dropping this hint to you, even though he doesn't know you, would cause him to lose at least a night's sleep. Such a proud man, such a poor boy. I'll tell you about it someday when the promise I made is not so fresh. Musty, old promises are easier broken.

Gertrude knows someone who knows you. Can't remember the name right now, so I'll ask her when I see her this week. She is such a grand friend. She has a way of getting me to find out what's really on my own mind by asking me the right questions. If you ever get to Paris you must meet her. Mr. Hemingway, I regret, is not as kind to her when she's out of the room as he is when she's in it.

Best--

Hill

Hillary's relationship with Hemingway developed again slowly because of their infrequent contact. He gave her warmth, not heat. Sara Murphy, a close friend of Scott Fitzgerald's, whom Hillary met through an associate of her father's who was in Paris for a short while, introduced her to Scott at a party at her home. The Murphys' house in

Paris was as elegant as their home in Juan les Pins was quaint. Although the Murphys entertained frequently, this was Hillary's first time at one of their famous parties.

She did not know many people. They seemed to her quite similar to the younger friends of her parents, from so-called "better" families, skilled at living off the accumulated earnings of dead ancestors. Many men were struck by Hillary's beauty but were afraid to come too near her within visual range of their wives, who themselves were wary of making conversation with an ingénue who could make trouble if placed in orbit around their fragile marriages. One might have supposed Scott Fitzgerald to be in the first category, since Zelda attended the Murphys' party with him, but the moment he saw Hillary he walked up and introduced himself. Though she thought he was effeminate, Hillary felt an immediate and inexplicable attraction to him. Duff Twysden, whom Hillary hardly knew, saw her standing in a corner talking to Fitzgerald and warned her later, in a whispered aside, that Zelda was at the party and that Zelda was "unpredictable."

Throughout the rest of the long evening Hillary noticed Fitzgerald surveying the room periodically, looking, Hillary correctly guessed, for her and not Zelda. She managed to avoid another encounter with him until just before she left. Thanking her hostess on the way to the door, she turned to take her cape from the maid when Fitzgerald rushed up to her, his face flushed, and handed her a note. She only smiled and stuck the paper in her purse. She waited until she got into a taxi before unfolding it.

"Dear Hillary Malone--

After we spoke I saw a woman I don't know point to me and whisper in your ear, after which your evasive maneuvers led me to believe you were told about my wife. With no desire other than to engage your

friendship, please meet me at The Dingo tomorrow afternoon at five. Please.

FSF."

Although Hillary occasionally mentioned Fitzgerald in her letters, it was not until early December 1940, after the writer's first heart attack and just before his death, that she fully articulated the combination of passion and ambivalence she felt for him in 1924. "He looked like a Princeton boy," she wrote to me --

"with his coat buttoned even when he sat, his dark hair parted in the middle, his shoes shined. I didn't want to see him again, especially since my experience with Raymond Guerre had convinced me that married men are dangerous. But I couldn't deny there was something about him I could not ignore as I tossed in bed that night. Perhaps the charming note, so old world, caused me to let down my defenses.

So I met him at one of the saloons popular at that time, and at first the only thing he could talk about was that I had actually come, and on time! He stared at me as I don't think I've ever been stared at, and talked continually, as though this would be the only time we would ever be together and I must understand him completely before leaving that bar. It was very strange indeed since he asked me virtually nothing about myself, as if he knew everything already and only needed to provide his biography to make the relationship between us complete. The only thing I said that seemed to surprise him was that I knew Ernest, whom it seemed Scott was anxious to meet. It always seemed when he was in Paris, Ernest wasn't, and vice versa.

I didn't need to delve very deeply to get him talking about Zelda or *Gatsby*, which seemed very strange to me since my limited experience with writers had convinced me they didn't like talking about wives or works-in-progress. Not Scott. He insisted Zelda wasn't insane, only "sensitive," but allowed that his moments of happiness and fulfillment were few. I had the definite impression (but how much has it been imbued with all we have learned about him since?) that their lovemaking was sporadic and poor and that he was blamed for it. He told me the plot of *Gatsby* and I could die laughing today at my impression. I thought to myself 'What a maudlin and depressing story.'

Scott was a wonderful writer, a spokesman for a certain class at a certain time. The autobiographical yearning and tragedy in all he wrote

from that point forward suffused his intimate conversations with people, including me. It was funny. I didn't like him much, but I was attracted to him physically. It was not feminine bonding (he could be very feminine), or a pull towards a long-suffering, brooding genius. I think it arose from some sense that as a man he could understand my desires and needs as well as I understood them myself. A current filled the air between us. I knew it and he knew I knew it. Although this put me at a decided disadvantage, he did nothing to exploit it. At least not then."

Fitzgerald brooded after Hillary left the Dingo when the late afternoon crowd began to fill the bar. After all that he told her about his marriage, she thought his reluctance to go back to his hotel was not surprising. Before she left he sought another assignation but Hillary demurred.

"Meet me again," he said. "Please."

"I'm not at all comfortable with this."

"Is it a matter of comfort? Is it?"

"Oh hell. Perhaps one day. We'll see."

"May I have your address here in Paris?"

Hillary told him. "Listen, Scott. I see what is coming, probably better than you do. You will write to me. Maybe. But I can never write to you. Right?"

Fitzgerald looked at her sheepishly. "I fear she opens my mail," he admitted. "But I can surely find a way to get your letters."

"Sure. Of course."

"I will write you only to let you know where I am. Forwarding addresses. You know. We move around a lot."

"And I need those addresses to what end?"

"Well, Hillary, perhaps opportunities will present themselves for us to see each

other. At least if you know where I am, the likelihood would be greater. Don't you think?"

Hillary shrugged. "The only thing I can say for sure, Scott, is that I'll try to get you in touch with Hemingway. It might be difficult. Both of you move around too much, but I suppose Paris is the hub of the wheel." Hillary could not imagine them as friends. Hemingway, she felt certain, would find Fitzgerald's delicacy and sensitivity palling, and the difference in their temperaments would only be aggravated by Fitzgerald's accomplishments as a writer, at a time Hemingway had achieved relatively minor success as a writer of short fiction with a promising future. *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and the Damned* already had made a good deal of money for Fitzgerald; Hemingway still wrote at a bistro because the noise from the sawmill below the window of his apartment, at 113, Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs, drowned out his thoughts.

Hillary tried to get them together, without success.

In June the Fitzgeralds settled in St. Raphael, and on the 17th Fitzgerald wrote Hillary a short letter.

"Dear Hillary:

We are idyllically settled in this place, which is by the sea and enjoys the saffron light of the Mediterranean. The novel is going well, surprisingly well, and I would be finished soon but for a thought of adding another ten thousand words. Max Perkins has sent me *War and Peace* which I'll start it soon. Another writer's invention and style never disrupt my own. I always seem to write at the same pace whatever else I'm doing. When I'm writing.

I don't know when I'll be in Paris again, and suggest you think about a bit of a vacation in these environs. It's really splendid, especially the coast from here to San Remo. If you want to write to me you needn't be fussy about Z reading over my shoulder. Address correspondence to me at General Delivery, St. Raphael. I'll check the post from time to time in

hopes of hearing from you.

As ever,
Scott

Hillary did not write to Fitzgerald in care of the post office at St. Raphael, or to any other address he forwarded to her over the years. She read his notes and letters and went to him or let him come to her only if she felt bored or playful. But having asked among her friends about Fitzgerald's wife and been told enough to convince her that she was completely irrational and that, inferentially, Fitzgerald was unstable, she was determined never to leave a trail leading to her door.

Hillary tried to get in touch with Hemingway early that summer until Gertrude Stein told her he was in Spain. No one she asked seemed to know when he would return to Paris. She felt extremely unsettled. Hemingway had told her she should do something with herself and she felt the need to talk to him about the transition she was undergoing. His opinion mattered more to her than anyone's. She also wanted to talk to him about Fitzgerald before Hemingway met him. She was sure he'd be derisive, or worse, and Hillary was anxious for them to have a relationship with each other. The man she respected most was in Spain; the one she wanted to make her lover was in the south of France. The result was a deepening ennui. She was sullen, even irritable, around her friends. Stein began to worry about her. Maria worried too, and suggested that Hillary join her and Eugene for a holiday in Nice. Hillary declined. She was convinced that proximity to Fitzgerald without seeing him would only make things worse. June of 1924, Hillary wrote to her brother ten years later, was the second worst month of her life.

CHAPTER EIGHT

In July Hillary's spirits lifted when she received a letter from Hemingway, postmarked Burguete, Spain. In it he told her about his waking early each morning for five days in a row to visit the ring where he was cogida three times and had "done 4 veronicas in very good form before the last morning when I was injured with contusions and pain in the pecho, then got drunk twice, maybe more than twice, whenever Bill [Bird] was drunk at least. I even saw a man get killed." Stein had told Hillary that Hem and Hadley were accompanied by Chink Dorman-Smith, Bob McAlmon, Don Stewart, John Dos Passos, Bill and Sally Bird, and George O'Neil. "Sally can't stand to see what happens to the horses and bulls," Hemingway wrote, "but Hash is out there every morning with me." At the end of the letter, Hemingway said he'd return to Paris at the end of the month but did not evince any interest in seeing Hillary. Sick of her paralyzing depression and intrigued by the gallery of characters with which Hemingway surrounded himself in Spain, Hillary packed quickly, spoke briefly with the landlady, and left for Spain, unannounced and uninvited.

The reason for her trip, when asked, would be a recent occurrence which had an ostensible connection with Hemingway but which would present thin camouflage for her sudden, impulsive decision to join him in Pamplona, where his letter indicated they were next headed. In late May Hillary met Ford Maddox Ford, editor of *transatlantic review*, in which Hemingway's short story "Indian Camp" was published the month before. Ford was to leave soon for England, was distracted and nervous, and combined an overt sexual overture toward Hillary with a few damning comments about Hemingway which shocked her. She had presumed a close friendship existed between the two men. On

the train Hillary vacillated back and forth between using her proposed affair with Fitzgerald or Ford's seemingly traitorous comments as the appropriate excuse for seeking out Hem in the midst of his revelry.

The trip was unexpectedly hard, not just because her fellow train passengers were a disgusting and filthy lot of Spaniards but because something she ate caused her to lurch for the water closet to vomit with violent spasms that seemed to tear her throat apart. As soon as she brought herself upright and looked aghast at her chalk white complexion and bloodshot eyes in the tiny mirror which vibrated against the wall of the moving car, and thought herself well enough to return to her seat in the second class car, which was all she could reserve on such short notice, the grinding began anew in her abdomen and quickly spread lower. She was convinced she could no longer exercise any degree of control over her body. She slept a scant hour before reaching Spain, waited an agonizing five hours for the train to Pamplona, during which time she could not sleep at all, and finally dozed fitfully during the last leg of her impulsive and quixotic journey to the little town Hemingway was in the process of making famous.

Hillary had spent no time with a Spanish man since her brief experience with Picasso. Disembarking at Pamplona, she was immediately charmed by the men. They all were anxious to help her get to her hotel. It was a local favorite someone on the train had recommended to her. The young American woman used them, smiling warmly, even seductively, at each offer to carry her bag, to find a taxi, and to speak for her with the desk clerk who worked at that early hour more to guard the door than actually receive and check-in guests. She drew a tepid bath, nearly fell asleep in the shallow water, which quickly cooled against her shivering skin, and curled up under an old wool

blanket. She immediately fell into a deep sleep.

Hillary woke to a thundering vibration, the panes of glass in the windows of her room moving visibly, blurring her focus on the squalid building across the street. Her first thought was that she had traveled all that way only to be crushed in the earthquake wreckage of a dilapidated hotel in a Spanish town no one had ever heard of. She leapt out of bed, slid her robe over her shoulders, and went to the window. She could feel herself shaking, not from the uproar outside but from an unfamiliar fear within. At the window, looking down, she was first disoriented because she did not understand what she was looking at. The window pane was dirty and the dark river moving below seemed like lava flowing, but after a moment she could distinguish the individual elements of the mass thundering down the narrow road, could even see the dusty exhalations of air from the snouts of the bulls and the dirt and debris kicked up into the air. Pushing her cheek to the glass and looking as far to the left as she could, Hillary saw them smash the wooden uprights of porches and other structures at the periphery of the herd.

It stopped as quickly as it began. Below her nothing; to the right, toward the plaza at the center of town, nothing; far away to the left, out of sight but still causing the wall of her room to vibrate, the herd disappeared. Hillary was still shaking but that too subsided after a few minutes. She sat for a while and then looked at her watch, saw it was only 7:30, and decided to get more sleep. She was hungry, and the pain in her bowels had stopped, but she wanted rest more than food. A residue of anxiety from the stampede kept her awake, but after twenty minutes of tingling uncertainty she fell asleep under the blanket in the quickly warming air of the room.

Waking shortly before noon, Hillary bathed again, dressed, locked her door with a smile at the futility of doing so, and walked down the street toward the Plaza de la Constitucion. The plaza was charming, with several small restaurants, a large church, a few shops, and a hotel far better than her own, forming a rectangle around a small park with a diminutive band shell and some old worn benches bleached to a bone white by the sun and decades of dried bird feces. People milled about the street which encircled the plaza and Hillary noticed that much of the activity was centered around the porch of the hotel nearly half way around the park to her left. She decided to go there first. The waiter at the terrace restaurant of the Hotel la Perla stared rudely but unapologetically at her as he led her to a table. Few tables were occupied since it was too early for comida; the people she walked past sipped dark coffee in demitasse cups. She asked for coffee and a bottle of soda; she would take some food later, slowly.

It was now quite warm but not unpleasant and Hillary removed her jacket before the sleeves of her blouse began sticking to her arms. The soda was cold and had a slight rusty taste, but the cup of coffee was among the best she had ever had. She began to look over the menu the waiter had brought her when she noticed a woman and two men walk slowly up the steps from the street and go directly to a large round table in the corner formed by two walls of the building. The couple was clearly American or British but the other man was dark complected, with large brown eyes and black hair. She sensed he was no native. The three plopped down, looking exhausted, and the waiter brought them bread and wine and a carafe of coffee without a word having passed between him and his customers. Hillary saw the man and woman glance at her, say a few words to each other, and glance at her again. Their friend, however, was not

so subtle, and only when Hillary returned his stare, focusing on his unblinking dark eyes, did the man break his trance and turn back to his companions.

After a while two more men joined the group, one of them practically yelling a complaint about something someone had said to him that morning, how he didn't have to take "that crap," that he should just leave them all to their indolence. His theatrics were interrupted by the arrival of Ernest Hemingway. Hillary felt suddenly embarrassed by her dash to Pamplona to see him, so instead of rushing over to his table, she raised her menu to just below eye level, and watched as Hemingway walked over to his friends. He stood and stared at the man who had been making all the noise until the other man sat down resignedly, his hands falling on the table top in capitulation. Then Hemingway sat.

Hillary lowered the menu slowly but didn't move or speak. She felt ridiculous behaving this way, waiting for Hemingway to discover her presence there when she had so clearly traveled to Pamplona to see him, but she continued to wait. Finally he saw her, and just as he broke into a big, sincere grin Hillary saw Hadley appear behind him. Not noticing his wife, he strode over to Hillary's table. Hadley followed.

"I don't believe it," he told her, bending down to kiss her on the cheek. Straightening, he noticed his wife and turned to her. "Hash, look who's joined our little party." Hillary stood up and Hadley came around the table to hug her.

"When did you arrive?" Hadley asked as the Hemingways sat down.

Hillary briefly recounted her early arrival after a day and night of illness. Hemingway looked amused. When Hillary described her wake-up call Hemingway laughed out loud and Hadley frowned. "We spend a lot of time with the animals,"

Hadley told her. "The best part by far is when they cut an ear off the dying animal and hand the blood-soaked thing to an appreciative bystander."

"Hash . . . " Hemingway began, standing up, but decided not to say it. He turned to Hillary. "Come over and meet the folks. How long you staying?" Hillary rose and followed them over to their table. She told him she didn't know.

Hemingway's arm swept an arc indicating his friends, who stood to meet her. "Hillary Malone, meet Bill and Sally Bird. . ." who in turn shook Hillary's hand, "Chink Dorman-Smith. . ." who nodded and didn't shake, probably still smarting from his minor confrontation with Hemingway a few moments earlier, "George O'Neil," who shook Hillary's hand vigorously, a big smile on his face, "Don Stewart," who only smiled, "and John Dos Passos, another unfortunate who has chosen writing as a way of life." He looked around the table in an exaggerated fashion, as if he couldn't believe the person he was looking for was not there. "And then there's McAlmon, who must still be asleep in his room." Hemingway laughed cruelly. Dos Passos, the man with the dark eyes who had stared so intently at Hillary, walked halfway around the table, took her hand, and with his other hand clasped her forearm in a gesture which, although not exactly intimate, was warm and charming. O'Neil pulled up a chair for Hillary and sat down in the one next to it, which Dos Passos had occupied. She noticed the discomfiture on Hem's face at O'Neil's provocation, but felicity won out over anger and Hemingway merely picked up his glass, moved over one seat, and the others responded in turn. For a moment Dos Passos looked angry as well, but he sat down, smiled at Hillary, and turned to Hemingway.

"Where did you meet this beautiful woman, Ernest?"

Hemingway ignored him and turned in his chair to address Bill Bird. Bird was a little shorter than Hemingway but equally robust looking. "Tell Hillary about the great fun we're having." Bill patted his wife's arm, leaned forward, and folded his hands on the table.

"Ernest just wants someone else to brag for him," Bird said, and paused to appreciate his friends' smiles. "Each morning he goes to the ring for amateur hour and lets the bulls chase him. Then he wrestles them to the ground before the cheering local citizens. A week ago he nearly died when Don fell in the middle of the ring and nearly bought it when one started to charge. Ernest diverted the animal's attention and nearly made it . . ." Bird paused to smile around the table, ". . . to the gate. Unfortunately the bull was faster and caught Ernest in the back. I hear he'll live." Hemingway just leaned back, smiling.

"Are you all right?" Hillary asked him. She looked worriedly at Hadley.

"Sure," he told her. "I like Bill's sense of humor. The weak always make fun of the brave."

Bird lifted his glass to toast him. "Hear, hear. Truer words were never spoken."

"Bravery, Hem, or foolishness?" Hillary asked.

"My feelings exactly, Hillary," Hadley said. "Being brave, like soldiers, and proving bravery with no point to it . . ."

"Oh Hash, for God's sake. It isn't 'proving' anything. It's simply a matter of having some fun. Right, Dos?"

Dos Passos looked up at Hemingway, his dark eyes sullen. "No." He turned to Hillary, grateful for the chance to talk to her. "You see, Ernest knows my feelings. He is

a great talent. I would hate to think that the next story won't exist because he was having fun with some bad-tempered livestock."

"It's all right," Hemingway assured him, "things aren't going so well anyway. Not so much distance from 'Sun Also Rises' to 'Sun Also Sets' and then to 'SOS'. Isn't that right, Chink?"

"Don't ask me questions. I have a hang-over," Dorman-Smith responded gloomily. He was tall and thin, with a handsome, chiseled face and light brown hair. Hillary noticed that his blue eyes were quite bloodshot.

"Jesus Christ, we all have hangovers. Well, except Hash, of course."

Dorman-Smith put his head in his hands and groaned. "Leave me alone."

At that moment another man walked up the wooden steps of the veranda and walked toward the table. His black hair, parted slightly off center and slicked back, gave off a high gloss in the early afternoon light. Hillary didn't like his smile, with its thin, compressed lips and small white teeth. The man pecked Sally Bird on the cheek, then Hadley, and went around to the other side of the table and sat next to Dos Passos after stopping, at Hemingway's request, to meet the newest member of the group. "Missed you this morning, Bob," Hemingway said offhandedly. "Well rested?"

McAlmon gave his friend a wary look, and then turned to Hillary. "Ernest loves to bait me," he said. "I sleep while he wallows in bullshit. Quite literal bullshit." McAlmon smiled at Hemingway but addressed Hillary. "But what he really can't stand is that I can consume more alcohol than he can."

"A wonderful pride . . ." Hem said seriously, and added, "and so much better for the senoritas."

"Well, anyway, I'm with Sally. I hate the cruelty," Dos Passos said, looking uncomfortable.

"Man's cruelty to man is indeed sad," Hemingway said sadly.

"You know bloody well what he means," McAlmon said bitterly. Hillary began to feel uneasy. Although McAlmon seemed to show no interest in her, she didn't like him, and also didn't like forming such a low opinion of a person so soon, especially since it could be interpreted as mere obedience to Hemingway's prejudice.

Hillary stayed in Pamplona for three days. She ate with the Hemingways and their friends late each night and got up early each morning to watch the men enjoy the bullfights. Although she went to the arena faithfully each morning, she thought it was obscene. Hillary could not even attempt to mimic the stoic tolerance Hadley displayed at the goring of horses and the slow, inescapable slaughter of proud but frightened bulls. They had an early lunch each day, which was the first meal for the men. Afterwards most of them, including Hillary, would sleep for a couple of hours in the afternoon heat under ceiling fans, and then wake, bathe, and regroup between five and seven. Hemingway was the lone exception. He spent his afternoons hiking in the foothills or fishing on the banks of one of the many nearby streams, returning late in the afternoon in a serene, even contemplative, mood. By the time he changed and came down for a drink the other men were usually gone. When, on the second afternoon of Hillary's visit, she asked Hemingway if the other men were entertaining the señoritas, he told her irritably that he had only been joking. Hillary let it go.

On Hillary's third night in Pamplona, something happened that changed her relationship with Hemingway. She had observed the way he could be verbally cruel to

his friends, but she assumed he would never turn that cruelty toward her. She was wrong. On the morning of the fourth day, Hillary left Pamplona. She never returned.

CHAPTER NINE

Hillary did not take the train to Paris. Instead she took the one that went south to the coast, through Navarra, east to Andorra, and along the Mediterranean into France at Perpignan. From there it wound around the Gulf of Lions to Marseille, and past Toulon to St. Raphael. It was the same itinerary Hemingway would follow a year later after leaving Pamplona for the Cote d'Azur. In Pamplona she waited so long at her hotel for a taxi she felt certain she would miss the train, but she arrived at the station on time. Dos Passos was waiting there for her, his large brown eyes not pleading but focused on hers with speculative exaggeration while Hillary stood at the stationmaster's window and exchanged her return ticket to Paris for a one-way ticket to St. Raphael.

"I really don't understand why you must leave so abruptly," Dos Passos insisted as she tucked the ticket into her purse.

"I don't like the climate here," Hillary said coldly.

"Hillary, are you in love with Ernest?"

Hillary looked severely at him. "No. I just wanted to be his friend but he abused the friendship. If there was one."

"He can be cruel to his friends. You should know that."

"Nothing can excuse his behavior last night." Hillary's train was announced and Dos Passos carried her bag to the side of one of the cars, where a porter asked for her ticket and carried her luggage up the steps. Hillary turned and squinted into the late morning sun at Dos Passos. "I don't want to hurt your feelings, Dos, but this whole group is sick." He did not reply. Hillary let him kiss her on the lips and then she stepped onto the train, turning back to say goodbye. "It isn't entirely the way you

perceive it, Hillary," Dos Passos said sadly.

"Perhaps it isn't. But whatever it is isn't for me. Goodbye, Dos."

"I'll see you in Paris?" he asked.

"That would be fine." She smiled and turned. The porter was waiting for her and preceded her to the first class compartment she had reserved. Sitting on the wide seat, she raised the shade and saw Dos Passos twenty feet down the platform looking up and down the row of compartment windows to find hers. Finally spotting it, he started walking quickly toward her just as steam was released in front of him, obscuring Hillary's view. It lasted only a moment but the train had begun to move and when the steam cleared, the platform, rolling past the window, was empty. Hillary smiled through her sadness, wondering why certain people came into her life only to disappear abruptly. She was weary, tired, and hot. Undressing to her camisole, she locked the compartment door, rinsed her face and arms in the basin, lowered the window shade, and lay down. She masturbated to a quick orgasm and fell asleep.

Hillary awoke at five that afternoon, stirred by the sounds of movement in the hallway outside her compartment and by the slowing train. She had been told that the train would be detached from the locomotive at the French border and a new locomotive attached for the remainder of the trip. She yawned and stretched and, after dressing quickly, called the porter.

The man knocked on her door and she opened it. "Mademoiselle," he said with a forced smile, "I will be busy for about thirty minutes. May I return then?"

"Of course." Hillary closed the door, pulled up the blind, and sat down. The light outside was different from anything she had ever seen, and she supposed it was the

pink-rose hue in late afternoon that Maria had told her was so distinctive about the south. Hillary watched the activity on the station platform absentmindedly, but she could not take her mind off her appetite. After a few minutes she decided she could not wait for the porter. The dining car certainly would not be open so early but she might be able to get a glass of wine and a snack. She walked through three cars to the dining car, sat at a table at the far end near the kitchen, and waited.

The door to the kitchen opened and a man stood with his back to Hillary, arguing loudly with someone. He paused to listen, then exploded again angrily, pulled a white towel off his shoulder and whipped the louvered door with it. Turning into the dining car he noticed Hillary, but showed no embarrassment that she had witnessed his outburst. The man walked over to her table, bowed, and said something in Spanish. He was probably in his mid-twenties and, although quite short, was very handsome. He stood and waited for Hillary's response to what he had said.

"Do you speak English?" she asked slowly in Spanish.

"A little, senora. Very little." He slicked back his long black hair and smiled at her, not as a waiter should smile at a customer, but as a man looking at a pretty girl.

Hillary smiled back at him. "Could I get something to eat?"

The waiter didn't respond. He abruptly turned around and walked back through the louvered doors into the kitchen. In a couple of minutes he returned with a bottle of Rioja, two fat sausages on a plate, sliced cucumber and tomato, and bread. After putting a wine glass, knife and fork, and napkin on the table, he turned his back to her before she could thank him.

Hillary could not remember being so hungry. She had not eaten since dinner the

night before. The waiter sat at a table a short distance away and watched her eat, smiling arrogantly each time she paused to look up at him. Hillary supposed that the man's good looks had probably seduced many a young foreigner in Europe on holiday. The waiter got up when a man entered the back of the dining car and came forward.

She turned around to see who it was. The man, not Spanish, wore a brown mackintosh tied at the waist. His short-cropped hair had a reddish tinge and he was thin but not gaunt. He had a short, neatly trimmed beard. The man spoke to the waiter in Spanish quietly yet commandingly and sat at a table across the aisle and behind Hillary's. She could only see him by twisting around in her seat. When the waiter returned from the kitchen with a cocktail for the man, Hillary stopped him.

"What is this?" she asked, pointing to one of the sausages with her fork.

"Sausage," the waiter replied, perplexed by the question.

"I know it's sausage," Hillary said impatiently, "but what kind of sausage? I've never had anything like it." From behind her the man in the brown mackintosh spoke to the waiter in Spanish and the waiter nodded at him and turned to Hillary.

"He says our chef calls it saucisse minuit. Do you like it?"

"It is the most remarkable thing I've ever tasted. It is not just a sausage."

"That is what many persons say," the waiter responded indifferently. "It is good, but it is sausage."

Hillary turned around in her seat and looked at the stranger. "Thank you," she said. "You must try it. It is remarkable."

The man's eyes bored into Hillary's. "Yes, I know." Then he opened a newspaper, folded it twice and began reading. Hillary turned around, her face feeling

flush at the man's abruptness. She tingled with curiosity but she was determined not turn around again and risk being rebuffed by the man. Twenty minutes later, when she got up to leave, the man was gone. The waiter had not returned to his table with a check and she had not heard him leave. That night, retiring early, she dreamed about the man in the brown mackintosh. He followed her down a rainswept cobblestone alley barely lit by a half moon. When she woke at dawn the man was about to reach out and touch her. From the loudness of his footsteps in her somnolent dream-state upon waking, she knew he had caught up with her.

Satisfied from her meal, Hillary returned to her compartment and read for two hours. At eight o'clock that evening, as the train slowed for the St. Raphael station, Hillary waited at the end of her car with an older woman from England. The woman asked if she was staying in Raphael and Hillary said she was. When asked where, Hillary said with some embarrassment that she didn't know. The English matron smiled understandingly and gave her the name of a small hotel facing the sea.

"It is owned by an old Swiss couple. They run it with clock-like precision," the woman told her.

Hillary's suite looked out upon the winding, palm-fringed drive that wrapped around the beach and followed the sea. It had a large terrace covered by a silver and black awning which allowed only the morning sun to shine through into the living room. In the evening, the sun illuminated her blue and mauve bedroom through a large window. It felt like home and Hillary settled in without hesitation. She slept most of the first two days, but then she began to venture forth in the afternoons. After a week, she was getting up early each day to get out and explore the Riviera. The old Swiss couple

not only saw to her every need but worried like parents when she went out in the evening and returned later than they expected. One of them was always in the lobby when she returned from a long walk on the beach or a longer than usual stay at a seaside cafe when she found people she liked talking to. She sunbathed on the beach across the road during the day, read on the terrace, or played chess on the concrete boards along the promenade with an old man she met who spoke perfect English.

“You remind me of my wife who died,” he told her the first day.

“I’m sorry.”

“No, no, mademoiselle, it is very good. She was young when death took her from me, so I remember her that way. Of course,” he added, looking away from her, “she was not as pretty as you.”

After the first few days, Hillary went for long drives -- first east to Aix en Provence, then as far west as San Remo. As she became more familiar with her new environment, she learned where the European tourists went, the places where the locals spent their leisure hours, and the favored haunts of Parisians and emigres living in Paris. She began to spend her evenings in certain clubs and bistros in Cannes, hoping she would run into people she knew in Paris. Her day trips took her to Grasse, St. Paul de Vence, Antibbe, Sur de Mer, and Juan les Pins. Never during those first few weeks did she meet the man she finally admitted to herself she expected to find in the south of France.

As relaxed as Hillary became in her new surroundings, each night, after returning to her hotel and going straight to bed, she dreamed about the end of her trip to Spain. She wanted the dream to end with a reconciliation with Hemingway. She wanted the

dream to release her so she could move past the experience she endured with him.

Her last night in Pamplona had begun quietly. She woke from her afternoon nap and joined Hadley and Sally Bird on the veranda of the Hotel la Perla around five in the afternoon. Sally was talking to Hadley about her husband's career, but shortly after Hillary sat down, she changed subjects. Hadley sat quietly, looking distracted.

"I know the maid is stealing money from us," Sally said. "She also drinks our whiskey. Well, I think so. Bill doesn't." Sally looked at Hadley, who remained slumped in her chair. "What's the matter, Hadley?" Sally thought she was preoccupied; Hillary assumed she was bored with Sally's monologue.

"I'm worried about Bumby. I know I shouldn't. We left him with Marie and Tonton."

"How is Bumby?"

"It's just as well you don't have help," Sally interjected. Hillary just stared at her but she noticed that Hadley was smiling with her eyes.

"He's fine," Hadley replied, ignoring Sally. "Ernest is a good father."

Hillary looked sharply at her. She could not imagine Hemingway as a "good father." "Why are you concerned?" she asked.

"It's just that he's been sick this summer. Nothing serious. But a mother likes to be with a child when he's vulnerable."

"Bill had an awful cold in April," Sally said. "I thought he was going to have to go to the hospital his lungs were so clogged."

A little after six, Sally yawned and said she needed to rest. Hillary was glad that Hadley wanted to stay and was as indifferent as Hadley when Sally excused herself. In

Paris, Hillary had wanted to tell Hadley that she was her husband's friend, their friend, that there was no need to worry. She didn't say this now because she sensed that Hadley, who was justifiably fearful of other women, was not fearful of her. When Sally left, Hadley reclined in her chair with her head back against entwined fingers. Hillary said nothing and motioned to the waiter to bring them each another glass of wine.

Finally Hadley spoke. "Ernest is terrified that I'm pregnant again." She stopped to observe Hillary's reaction. There was none. "He doesn't want me to know how much he wishes for 'Kitty' to start this month, since 'Kitty' is a few days late." Hadley sighed and straightened in her chair. "His fear of another child frightens me."

Hillary leaned across the table and took Hadley's hand in hers. "He has no regular income as a writer, Hadley. Be reasonable. Children are an awful responsibility."

"You think I'm overreacting?"

"Probably. Understandably. Does he talk about his feelings?"

"Lord no." Hadley sipped the wine the waiter brought. "You see, Hillary, it's as if I've gotten on a ride at an amusement park. I did pay for the ticket and climbed into the car, but now I'm up in the air and it seems out of my control. Do you know what I mean?"

"Yes. I do know what it means to be in a situation you thought was defined in a certain way only to find it quite different."

"You're sweet." Hadley slumped back in her chair and sighed.

Hillary changed the subject. "Where are the men? It's almost seven o'clock."

Hadley crossed her legs. "Lined up for sex, I imagine. I'm not supposed to know

that, although I can't imagine why they think I don't."

"I'm sorry, Hadley, I don't understand."

"Chink and George and Dos are at the whorehouse. They line up like Brit schoolboys gone to town on a Saturday afternoon."

"You're joking." Dos had such a pure quality; Hillary could not imagine him paying sixteen year old Spanish girls for sex.

Hadley read her mind. "Oh yes, Dos too. And I doubt when Sally returned to her hotel room Bill was there taking a nap either," Hadley said matter-of-factly.

"What about Ernest?"

"I don't think he's done that sort of thing since we've been married. Or before. He's much too proud to stand in line at a brothel. He's the sort who would fall in love with a real woman and feel tortured with guilt."

Hadley finished her drink and said it was time for her to rest. Hillary left the veranda with her. They stood on the street opposite the plaza, enjoying the cool evening breeze that followed the setting sun. "We're all meeting here at ten for dinner. You'll join us, of course," Hadley said, taking one of Hillary's hands in hers and squeezing it. "Don't be annoyed, especially with Dos."

"No, no, of course not. I just would never have guessed." They parted at the outskirts of the plaza and Hillary walked to her hotel. She looked forward to dinner, her enlarged knowledge of the men a tool that would ward off any temptations she might otherwise feel. In the dingy lobby she saw the crippled young man who had helped her talk to the desk clerk the morning she arrived. He smiled at her with sad eyes and she noticed that several of his teeth were missing. Although she had not explored the

countryside around Pamplona, she noticed that with the sole exception of the main plaza, the town was squalid and the people poor. Hemingway talked almost reverently about the fishing, and hiking along the rivers and up into the foothills, but Hillary could not understand why he took his holidays in such a remote, sad place. Up in her room she stood at the open window and stared out at the hills rising to the west of town, mostly brown with patches of green, and imagined Hemingway walking down one of them with a creel full of fish. When she undressed and lay down on the bed, sleep came quickly.

When she awoke, it was after ten but she didn't hurry. It was nearly eleven when she joined the Hemingway crowd on the veranda of the Hotel de Perla. Apparently, someone had had an argument just before she arrived and the mood was glum. Hadley kissed Hillary warmly and Hem hugged her before she sat at the same large round table, between Chink and Dos Passos. Hemingway suggested she try the rum drink he was having and when she nodded, he called the waiter over.

"What's everyone been up to this evening?" Hillary asked mischievously. Hadley tried not to grin and Chink, George, and Dos looked down at the table.

"Just seeing the sights," Dos said. He didn't look at her as he spoke.

"I'd be interested in seeing the town the next time you go out," Hillary said, staring at him.

Hem looked around the table with a disgusted look and spoke to Hillary. "The cathouses in Pamplona aren't nearly as lavish as they are in Madrid, but these peasant girls can be sweet. Or so I've been told." He was looking at Dos Passos. "That true, Dos?"

Dos Passos' head came up in a defiant gesture. Hillary noticed he used a musky aftershave lotion. Tiny beads of sweat dotted his forehead although there was a cool breeze. "So I understand, Ernest," he said, looking at Hillary.

Hemingway continued, looking at Dos but talking to Hillary. "My friends don't join me simply for the thrill of watching Bill and me do the veronica." He had finished his rum and was drinking rioja from a tall glass he filled from a pitcher in the middle of the table. "It's a great little place for whoring around. That true, Dos?" he asked once more.

"Come on, Ernest," George whined. He looked tired as he glanced at Hillary. "We take our pleasure in the local establishments, Miss Malone, we who do not have wives to nourish us." Having said this, he took a healthy swallow of wine and put his head down on the table.

"Must have been a real fighter, George," Hemingway uttered under his breath. Hadley looked helplessly at him.

"I heard that, Ernest," O'Neil said, his head still resting on the table top.

Hadley intervened. She called the waiter over and ordered food. He refreshed their pitcher of wine, and brought tapenade and bread and a garlic spread that was one of Hem's favorites. The talk became lighter, Dos started smiling again, and George took his head off the table long enough to swallow another glass of wine and eat some food.

Hemingway was quiet. Bill and Sally Bird got into another petty argument. Hemingway and Dos talked about Ford Maddox Ford. Chink and McAlmon, who had arrived late as usual, talked furtively in the corner. Hillary just took it all in. Sometime later, she told Dos Passos that she had met Mr. Ford. She noticed Hem listening to her on the far

side of the table and made sure he heard her when she told Dos that the *transatlantic review's* editor had expressed more than a passing interest in her. While Dos Passos seemed amused by this, Hemingway was noticeably angry, and he couldn't speak to Hillary or even look at her for the next hour.

She drank too much. Everyone drank too much except Hadley, who retired early. It was well after midnight. Soon after Hadley left, Chink, George, Bill and Sally went to their rooms. At two in the morning, only Hemingway and Dos Passos remained with Hillary, alternating anecdotes for her benefit. At last, all three fell silent and stared at each other. Hillary thought each man was waiting out the other to be alone with her. She told Dos to go to bed when she noticed him miss the table twice with his elbow. Hemingway asked her to go for a walk with him. Hillary was not too drunk to notice the hurt and dejected expression on Dos' face as he left the porch and disappeared into the thinning crowd in the plaza.

"The fireworks start soon," Hem told her. "They do it every night the last week of the festival. There is a fine spot to watch not far from here."

"At this hour of the morning?" Hillary spoke slowly, trying not to slur her words.

"The partying goes on all night. This is the seventh inning stretch."

He preceded her down the steps, across the plaza, and up a side street paved with rough stones. The street was bordered by brown and gray stone houses with small windows and flat roofs. On the outskirts of town they walked a narrow path up a hill through a stand of trees to a small clearing bathed in the light of a nearly full moon. Hemingway sat on the long, moist grass and Hillary joined him. They had not yet adjusted their legs to get comfortable when the fireworks began. Rockets streamed into

the sky above them and exploded in blue and white light. Smoke trailed off below the exploding light as if soldiers were sending tracers to locate them on that hilltop. Hemingway reclined on an elbow and alternated glances between the illuminated sky and the wide-eyed expression on Hillary's face. All of the light and noise made her dizzy.

"I love this country," Hemingway said quietly.

"I can see why," she lied.

"Can you?"

"Why. . . yes," she said uncertainly.

"I'm not so sure."

"What is it you love so much?" she asked.

"The people," he said, and paused as they watched a burst of color above the town. "They are stoic and passionate."

"Both?" she asked

"Yes. They suffer but have a fever for life."

They reclined on the wet grass in silence and watched the fireworks until the black, jewelled sky fell silent again. Hemingway reached out and clasped Hillary's hand in his and rolled toward her. She sat up abruptly.

"Oh for God's sake," he said disgustedly and rolled onto his back.

Hillary didn't know what to say. The stars swirled above her and she could not focus on any of them. The moon was blurry, and she was aware of how drunk she was. She lay down again, her head next to Hem's shoulder on the grass. A part of her wanted to move away from him in the now dark glen, but another part of her wanted to

get closer to him. His hand reached over and cupped her right breast, massaging it gently, his thumb searching for the nipple which now was erect in the chill air. Hillary froze. This could not be happening. A terror from long ago gripped her, yet she calmly took Hem's hand, moved it back to his chest and said nothing.

Hemingway got up and propped himself on an elbow. "Are you frigid?" he asked. "Or do you just like to tease the fellows?" She noticed he was slurring his words badly.

Hillary sat up, trying to control herself. She said nothing.

"I mean," Hemingway began, but then dropped back down on the grass, his head audibly hitting the ground with force, ". . . ouch, goddamit!" he exclaimed, and rubbed the back of his head. "I mean, what is a beautiful woman good for, for Chrissake? You're good for fucking!" He stood up, cleared his throat, and spat away from her.

"I thought we were friends," Hillary said as calmly as she could. She could feel her eyelashes become wet and her face flush pink.

"You're fucking gorgeous! And you write poetry as good as any I've read. Don't you understand, you sniveling little brat? I've wanted to fuck you since I met you," He weaved above her as he shouted. Had she ever done anything to suggest she wanted more than friendship from this man?

"I had no idea."

"I had no idea'," Hemingway whined in a shrill soprano, mocking, taunting her.

"Well I didn't. I thought we were friends. I can't imagine you actually get people to go away with you and take your abuse, you miserable, self-indulgent shit!"

"Oh, I like your spunk," he said, laughing and weaving around her as she stood away from him with her fists clenched. "How 'bout a quick one here in the grass? No

one will ever know." He lay down dramatically, arms open to her.

"You're a disgusting human being, Mr. Hemingway," Hillary said coldly and started walking quickly down the hill.

She did not turn back or respond to his vituperative response to her exit line. She broke into a run and held back the tears when she heard him call out that she was just another "fucking cunt" he couldn't count on anymore.

It is said that our dreams last no more than five minutes and we remember only the last one of the night, perhaps the mere shadows, or a fragile outline, of the penultimate one. Hillary dreamed the nightmare of her night in the hills above Pamplona over and over until she thought she would never wake to anything again except the abuse of a man she had trusted, whom she followed from her temporary home to a distant place because she loved him. She had wanted him to tell her where to go next, how to become his equal in the world.

Weeks after that night in Pamplona, driving back to St. Raphael from a party in Cap d'Antibes at the house of a new acquaintance, she wished she had not stayed so late. But what Hillary really wished for was an end to the graphic images in her recurring nightmare. On the winding road that night, she resolved to go back to Paris and create a more ordered life without any more thoughts about guidance or friendship from Ernest Hemingway. At her hotel she stopped at the front desk, thinking there might be a letter from her mother. She had asked Maria to forward her mail there until she returned to Paris. With quiet satisfaction, she took the envelope from the clerk in her white-gloved hand and walked to the elevator inspecting it. It was not from her mother; there was no post-mark or return address. On the top floor, after the door to

the elevator closed behind her and before she opened the door to her suite, she stood in the dim light under a hall sconce and read the note.

Hillary:

I found you. Don't ask how, but I found you. I am staying with a friend in Canne for a few days and want to see you before I leave. I am most terribly sorry that something happened to disturb your visit to Spain and trust you will call me at the number below at your earliest convenience. After you left I went on a long walk to Andorra with the fellows and can only imagine, from the intermittent conversation, what you endured. Ernest won't say what happened, so it must have been pretty awful, but nothing is ever as bad as you think.

Fondly,

Dos

Below his signature was a telephone number. Hillary did not write it down or commit it to memory. She would not leave that morning. But when she did return to Paris, she would reinvent herself. Not as a poet. That part of her life was inexplicably closed off from the future. Walking out on the balcony of her bedroom, she could see the white foam of receding wavelets in the sea beyond the sand, and was surprised the surf made no noise. Under a street lamp below her a young couple embraced and kissed each other, at first tentatively and then fervently. After a few minutes they clasped hands and wandered from the corona of light into the dark recesses of the park which bordered the sandy beach. Smiling, Hillary crumpled Dos' note and threw it into the breeze, on which it was swept briefly before falling to the street below. She felt alone but determined. She believed that at last she knew where she was going, and why.

CHAPTER TEN

Hillary had many lovers during the mid to late 20s. Not exactly promiscuous by today's standards, the sheer number of men she took to her bed, many only once, would in that place and time have caused even the most forgiving Parisian to label her a slut. Hillary knew this. Her rationalization was that it was only experience -- she wanted to make love to thin men, fat men, muscular men, young and old men, professionals, fruit vendors, bankers, artists, funny men, serious men, all colors in the male gender's rainbow. She would make herself ready for the man, maybe even the men, who would really count, stunning them with her proficiency in the art of lovemaking and making them wonder over the anomaly of a young, well-educated, beautiful American who could explore the world of eros as skillfully as the most experienced prostitute. Her delusion was complete and she buried any glimmering shard of subconscious thought that might have suggested to her that she was seeking from many men the sense of being loved and needed she would never receive from the only truly important man in her life.

Hillary relished the sense of power that physical love gave her. Throughout her life in France in the early years, men who were strong or famous or wealthy, even those with reputations for callous indifference to women, became quiet, even passive, when she held them in her arms after they made love to her. When they slipped into a warm bath in Hillary's candlelit bathroom and felt her long delicate fingers snake between their legs or her pointed pink tongue peruse the contours of their mouths, they gave in to her completely. It never lasted because she never let it. As soon as they began talking about the future, even if only the promise of another assignation, she snuffed the

candles by the rim of the draining tub, pulled on her silk robe, and waited impatiently for them to dress and leave so she could douche, brush her hair, and climb into bed beneath the comforter to feel her body heat the space into which she escaped.

From the beginning it was different with Scott, and not merely because he preceded most of the men with whom Hillary became intimate. His very reticence caused her to extend herself beyond any prior longing, and his inadequacy excited in her the need to show him she could make something more of their experience together, more of himself. He was staying at the Hotel du Cap, more or less "with" Gerald and Sara Murphy, not half a mile from where Hillary sat one night at a dinner party at the home of the William Bartleys, a couple she met in Nice a few days after she cast Dos Passos' crumpled note out upon the evening air. There were less than a dozen guests at the Bartleys' home but as soon as she could, Hillary wandered outdoors to devise an excuse for the premature departure she was about to make. The only people there whom she knew were the Bartleys and she did not feel like a long evening explaining to strangers who she was, why she was there, or why she was there alone. She sat on a wicker loveseat and lit a cigarette -- she had just begun to smoke -- when Fitzgerald quietly sat down next to her and spoke her name. Hillary was startled. "My God, it's you," she exclaimed.

"Hillary. Jesus girl."

"Where is Z, Scott?" she asked after allowing him to kiss her.

"Not here tonight. She is having one of her headaches, a serious one." Then Hillary watched helplessly as he began to tremble and put his face in his hands. In the semidarkness of the garden she thought he was crying. She waited for him to compose

himself. In a moment he straightened up and looked at her. Contrary to her surmise, his eyes were clear and dry.

"Zelda is in love with another man." He said it so quietly Hillary could hardly make out the words.

She could understand a wife's unfaithfulness to Scott Fitzgerald, but to her, Zelda's illness, or "eccentricity," whatever it was, seemed to preclude such a "normal" thing as an affair. "Another man?" she said in disbelief. "You're joking." She clasped Scott's left hand in hers.

He covered it with his other hand and looked down at the ground. "Yes, a French aviator. The bastard clearly has no intention of marrying her or anything equally decent, but Zelda is paralyzed. I've been going nearly out of my mind."

"Terrible for you," Hillary murmured. "Where is she?"

"We were in St. Raphael but . . ."

"I'm at the Jean Louis there," Hillary said, interrupting him.

"Really? How long?"

"Two weeks. God I love it here. Anyway . . ." Hillary puckered her lips. "How does Zelda manage this affair when you're staying together in a hotel?"

"I'm working on my book all the time and she comes and goes day and night. They met in Cannes," Scott said calmly, but then pulled away from Hillary. "I know she has stayed two nights with him."

People rose from their chairs in the room beyond the patio doors. Hillary assumed the cocktail hour was winding down and dinner was imminent. "I'm leaving this party, Scott. I only know the Bartleys . . . and you, and I don't want to stay. Did you

drive here?" He told her he took a taxi. "Will you drive me to my hotel? I have a car."

Scott looked confused and Hillary could only guess what her suggestion meant to him. Impatient with his indecisiveness, she said she would meet him at her car in front of the house and left the patio to get her wrap. Outside, she waited in the lane, and after a few minutes Scott walked down the slate walk to the gravel drive, took her arm, and walked her to the car, the seats of which were covered with dew-moistened flower petals from the overhanging branch of a Mimosa tree. He said nothing to her as he drove fast along the narrow road, down from the hills above Antibes to the outskirts of Cannes and along the coastal highway to St. Raphael. Had she opened her eyes, Hillary would have seen nothing but the auto's yellow beacons illuminating a rock wall on the right and just a few feet of blackness on the left. She put her head back and closed her eyes. The car was moving too fast and there was no guard rail separating the roadbed from the Mediterranean, but she knew Scott was not driving fast to frighten her. He was overwrought.

At Hillary's hotel Scott parked her automobile across the street and walked her to the front door. The old doorman, who had developed a slight crush on the pretty, polite American girl, looked at Scott disapprovingly as they entered through the double glass doors and walked to the elevator. Scott kissed Hillary's hand in the rising car, ignoring another equally disapproving glance from the elevator operator. Hillary handed him her key and waited as he fumbled trying to insert the metal tongue into the cold steel lock, and then followed him into the dark apartment. She turned on lights.

The next hour was a dance, a ridiculous dance. Scott alternated between tears, rage, and what seemed to be genuine worry about the effect Zelda's affair would have

on her stability. He mumbled continuously, nearly incoherently, about it. Hillary tried to get him to talk about the book but the story he was living that moment made it difficult to address the much better one he was inventing. Throughout his monologue about betrayal Hillary listened and murmured reassurances to him. After an hour of this Hillary realized she had moved from the chair opposite the couch where Scott sat, to the couch itself, to the other side of the room, and finally to the floor between the couch and the coffee table, at Scott's feet. Her hair had been pinned up. At some point she let it down, and chestnut curls cascaded down around her face and onto her shoulders. Fitzgerald finally touched her along the side of the neck as he talked about something Hillary could not remember later because she had stopped listening. Later, when she read his books, she could not believe that this boring man had written them, or that she had wanted him so much.

Finally he stopped, at a moment corresponding to the rage phase of his gushed feelings about what Zelda had done to him. "You're so angry," Hillary said.

"Goddam right! She's. . . she's horrible"

"Scott, take your anger out on me," Hillary said slowly. She thought anyone could understand this cue.

He didn't. "Why should I be angry with you?"

Hillary rolled her eyes in disbelief. "I didn't say be angry with me. I said take out your anger *on* me."

"I'm sorry Hillary, I don't understand you." He was genuinely perplexed.

Hillary slid upward onto the couch, taking his hands in hers. "Scott, act out your anger with me. Make love to me."

"You want me to make love to you?"

"Yes."

"How will that help?"

"It won't, but it will make you feel good. I'm pretty sure it will." She couldn't believe she was pandering to him. Many another man would have been all over her by now.

"If only you had told me you wanted to when it couldn't be misconstrued so badly."

"By whom, for God's sake? We're alone."

"I mean, I have wanted you too, but intimacy now would seem such clear retribution."

"To whom? Who will think that if no one knows?" But it was hopeless and Hillary gave up. She stood in front of him. "I'm sorry, Scott. You're right. It was a foolish suggestion."

At that moment Fitzgerald understood. He got up, put his arms around Hillary's waist, and kissed her. He was short and Hillary was tall, making the angles a bit awkward, and his lips quivered with fear when he kissed her, but the desire she felt for him was validated by her physical response to this first intimacy. She grew very excited. She walked him to her bedroom, dimmed the light, and allowed him to undress her. As he stepped back to begin removing his trousers, he stopped to stare at her before she slipped under the coverlet, admiring her body in the mauve glow reflected by the deeper mauve wallpaper. Sensing his shyness, Hillary rolled over, away from him, closed her eyes, and waited.

She soon learned Fitzgerald didn't know the first thing about how to make love to a woman. Worse, he didn't understand the language of love that would have informed him that Hillary would gladly have helped him disgorge in the parlor what he so abruptly spilled in the foyer. He was embarrassed and attempted to leave the bed, telling her it was late and he had to go, but Hillary was persistent, lying against him, her head on his chest, talking to him while she stroked his shoulders and thighs, moving away and then creeping toward him again, with subtle and gentle movements she hoped would make him relax. He lay rigid and fearful.

"Zelda has told me I'm inadequate," he uttered, and Hillary felt all her effort dissolve in the poor man's shattered self esteem.

"Zelda doesn't know what she's talking about. You're wonderful, just nervous is all." She lay back on her pillow, leaving a space between them. "Someone I once met said that the first time any two people make love isn't any good. They have to become intimate before they can be intimate. That makes sense to me."

Fitzgerald didn't respond. Hillary started to feel sleepy and wished he would go, wished they could start all over again some other time. This one was unrecoverable. But after a few minutes Scott rolled atop her and began kissing her. He tried too hard, used too much effort, his passion too coerced to be real, and when he tried to enter her he couldn't. Again he resisted her assistance.

He finally cried. Hillary had no idea how to deal with this, so she ignored it. After a while Scott got out of bed, sniveling like a child, pulled on his clothes in the dim light, and sat in a chair by the window. Hillary didn't know what to do. One moment she thought she loved him, the next she thought she would scream if he didn't leave

because she was fearful she would say something hurtful and wicked. He walked into the bathroom. She got out of bed, walked to the bathroom door, and watched him comb his hair. His hand shook as he pulled the comb across his scalp. He looked at her in the mirror and smiled but was clearly afraid to turn around and face her directly.

"My God, you are beautiful," he said, staring at the erect red caracoles in the middle of her breasts, the flat alabaster stomach, and the dark delta on which his vessel had washed ashore. "May I see you again, or are you finished with me?" he asked.

Hillary came into the tiled bath and took a robe from the hook behind the door. She was quite calm. "I would like to have lunch with you tomorrow," she said.

"That would be fine," Fitzgerald said formally, relieved at the thought of an encounter that would not test him. "Where?" he asked.

While she thought about this, Hillary took his place at the basin and washed and dried her face. Standing upright, she turned to him. "Down the boulevard, on the beach side, is a bistro called 'Caballah'. Can you meet me there at one?" He told her he would be there. "Where will you be tonight?" she asked.

"At the Hotel du Cap," he told her.

"And Z?"

"Oh, she'll be there. She probably is there now."

"Wondering where her Scotty is?"

"I doubt it." He straightened up and looked directly into her eyes. "I very much doubt it."

"Then the Hell with her," Hillary said coldly. "I'll see you for lunch at one." She abruptly turned and walked out of the bathroom, through the bedroom and living room

and outside to the terrace. She sat on a lounge chair, which was wet from the dew. A few minutes later she heard the door close and, a short time later, saw the old doorman walk out to the curb and look up and down the road for a taxi. He finally flagged one with his whistle and Scott ran out to the street, looked up in Hillary's direction, apparently saw nothing, and got into the vehicle. Hillary stood up, waited outside a few minutes longer, and then went into the suite feeling exhausted and cold. She lay on the couch under the breeze from the open terrace door and once again brought on her own release. There was no pleasure in it. She wanted a man who could use her body for his own selfish purposes but who was able to understand her own need for pleasure.

Hillary wrote me a terse letter at that time which I found inexplicable. My inherent jealousy prohibited a response.

Dear _____:

When we were alone that time and you wanted me (at least I think you wanted me), did I intimidate you or frighten you in a way that would have prevented you from making love to me if I had wanted you to? Or do men sometimes just lose their vitality?

Sorry for this. I had a lot of wine tonight, but I'm genuinely curious and you're a real friend, not like all the phony ones around here. I'll write you a real letter soon.

Hill

When she arrived at the beachfront cafe five minutes early the next afternoon, Scott was already seated at a table against the wall, facing the water, presumably so he would not be seen from the walkway or road above the restaurant. When he stood to greet her he almost knocked over his water glass. His palm was sweaty.

"Why don't you order a bottle of wine?"

"Of course." Scott called the waiter over and ordered a local dry, white Burgundy.

Hillary waited until the waiter bustled off. "Scott, relax. Would you?"

"I admit I'm nervous a bit. You know, being out with you in public after . . ." He didn't finish the thought but Hillary knew what he meant.

"What happened last night after you left?" she asked.

He told her Zelda was asleep and the Murphys were still out with friends. He worked on the book. "Funny, you know. There I sat, a failure with two different women, doing some of the best writing I've done in weeks. Perhaps we do have to suffer."

"Nonsense," Hillary scoffed, but then softened her tone. "I'm glad it's going well. Can you tell me anything about it, I mean beyond the sketch you gave me before?"

Fitzgerald talked through a bottle of wine and a light lunch, mesmerizing Hillary with more than his plot, elaborating the characters and personalities of Tom and Daisy and Gatsby. The only breaks in his personal tour of *Gatsby* occurred when Scott talked about the evening before. And when he spoke of Zelda.

"What troubles you most about last night?" she asked him after he said for the third time how painful it had been for him.

"When I was with you, my inadequacy . . ." and he stopped to smile when he saw Hillary roll her eyes, "but later, when I went to bed, I was overcome with guilt for being unfaithful to Zelda. I do love her, you know."

"I know you do, Scott. Why don't you look at it differently?"

"How would that be?"

"That however much you love each other, she's put you through Hell and you're

entitled to some enchantment."

"Yes, I've thought that. I like that too, the 'enchantment.' But then I come back to you, to us last night."

Hillary understood. "You were not a failure, Scott. Men have such a terrible burden when they're with a woman, especially the first time. Women don't even have to be aroused to function sexually; men must. What is bothering you is that being unfaithful to Zelda hurts more because it wasn't a raving success, and I suspect you'd be happier in your guilt if what made you guilty was better than it was."

Fitzgerald smiled. "What wisdom from such a young woman." He seemed, if not cheered, at least comforted, and went back to talking about Daisy, whom Hillary didn't like. Some sunbathers started pulling their mats up under the cafe awning and Hillary noticed how dark it had become. Black clouds loomed to the north, unseen behind them, and the sky over the water became gray and misty. Scott wanted to take Hillary to her hotel in a taxi but she told him she preferred to walk, even at the risk of getting soaked by the rapidly approaching storm clouds. He kissed her quickly on the lips as he got into the taxi. "Goodbye, girl," he said, and Hillary wondered for how long.

It wasn't long. Hillary and Scott were together twice more during their separate holidays in the south that year. Each time, Scott was stronger, more confident, if not proficient, and Hillary succeeded in her goal of walking out of his life feeling good about what passed between them. Although he continued to express guilt, Hillary finally convinced him that his feelings were due mostly to Zelda's illness, to which Hillary did not refer directly, choosing instead to mask her belief that Zelda was sick and unstable. She used words like "vulnerable" and "fragile." She realized that her point -- Scott

would have felt much less badly had Zelda been strong and healthy -- was complete rubbish.

She wrote to Stein that week.

Dear Gertrude:

Please give my best to Alice before I forget. This has been a remarkable visit for me in so many ways. I look out at the low breakers and wonder how long all of this can remain so unspoiled.

You introduced Hemingway to the pleasures of Spain, didn't you? Oh if you could see him there with his merry band. I say this so calmly as I try not to feel mistreated and a whole lot lonely. I miss you. Gertrude, you have such a nose for the best and worst in people. I should sit at your feet. I'll be back quite soon and look forward to doing just that.

I wish I could see Pablo just once more.

My best always,

Hillary

A few weeks after she stopped seeing Scott, Hillary was bored. She planned her return to Paris. She missed Maria and Gertrude. She also missed Hemingway, however much she could not allow herself to acknowledge it. Consciously, she believed that she and Ernest would never see each other again.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

In August 1924, Hemingway and Hadley returned to Paris. The following month Hillary returned to the city from the Cote d'Azur on the Train Bleu. It was a Sunday, and she had forgotten that all the shops would be closed, so all she could do was walk around Nice in the afternoon. The train was not due to depart until eight. She loved the Promenade d'Anglais and the coastal veneer of Nice but not the interior, which was densely populated, noisy, and dirty. The area around the station was run down and depressing. Not only were most shops and restaurants closed on Sunday, she was stunned to learn that even the public toilets in the train station were closed. Feeling growing discomfort, she checked her bags and ventured into the surrounding neighborhood to find a bar or restaurant where she could use a water closet. On a corner a block from the train station, she found a place that was open, and walked inside.

"May I use the toilette?" she asked the bartender, a huge man with a bald head.

"No," he said abruptly in French. "Not unless you are a patron." He pointed through a doorway into the dining room, where a few families were having their Sunday dinner, and then at the booths lining one wall on the bar side of the restaurant.

Hillary went to a booth, sat down, and ordered a cup of tea. While the waitress went to get it, she headed to the back of the place to use the accommodations. They were uncharacteristically filthy. When she returned to her small table she decided to try the tea rather than merely pay for it and leave, as she had intended. Unkempt rogues sat at the bar, turning occasionally on their stools to stare at the pretty girl who was so different from the whores who stopped by for a quick cognac before returning to the

streets. Finally, unable to tolerate the rude attention she was receiving, Hillary got up to leave and heard them laugh at her as she passed through the front door.

Later, after finding her compartment on the train, she undressed and fell asleep before the train pulled out of the station. She wanted to escape the scarred and twisted faces in that bar faster than the passage of time would allow. She wanted the safety of sleep.

When she arrived in Paris early the next morning, Hillary was greeted by a freshly cleaned apartment and flowers in a vase by the window in her living room. There was a card from Maria and Gene welcoming her home and urging her to call them. Hillary would have done that anyway, but she felt nauseous and faint, with a damp forehead and clammy hands. Despite a cool breeze from the open window, she was hot. Hillary offhandedly attributed it to the food on the train. It hadn't tasted right but she had several mouthfuls of cheese before her suspicions formed. She sweated all afternoon in bed and, exhausted, finally slept until early the next morning, when she woke with violent stomach cramps. The spasms convinced her she was poisoned by the slice of cheese she had had with her coffee. Hillary was well enough by mid-morning to call Maria who, immediately noticing her weak voice, said she would be right over. When Maria arrived at Hillary's apartment shortly after noon, she took one look at her young friend and called her doctor, a semi-retired French army physician whom she and Gene trusted. He arrived in less than an hour. After examining Hillary, he ruled out food poisoning.

"Well then what's wrong with her?" Maria asked.

"I don't know," the man said with irritation, unaccustomed to having his diagnoses

questioned.

"I'm sorry, Maurice," Maria said. "What should she do?"

He prescribed rest, fluids and no food for at least a day. "I don't think it is anything serious, but it is not a toxin, of that I am sure." He promised Maria he would check on her the following afternoon and wrote down the name of a syrup she could get at the chemist that would settle her stomach. Maria went into Hillary's bedroom to tell her what the doctor had said, and left to get the palliative he prescribed.

Four days later, Hillary felt well enough to go to Miss Stein's apartment on Saturday afternoon. Stein noticed that Hillary had lost weight and looked pale. It was nevertheless a pleasant reunion for Hillary, seeing so many friends after being away for nearly two months, but she tired quickly. After less than an hour, she walked to the street and found a taxi. Later, she told no one she had to stop and rest three times while walking the stairs up to her apartment or that while the cramps and diarrhea had subsided, the fever recurred and she had no appetite. She wrote many letters during the nearly eight week duration of her unexplained illness; the only one that survives is one she sent to her mother in early November, when she was sure the worst of it was past.

Dear Mother:

I feel terrible for not writing since August and I can imagine how worried you are. Your letters have been a real comfort to me since I have been fairly sick the last few weeks. Please don't worry, though, as everything is fine. Maria found a wonderful doctor who has stopped by four or five times a week, checking me out and assuring me that I merely caught something similar to "fevers" he has seen many times. They leave the body as mysteriously as they enter it and require nothing more than common sense and patience. At first I didn't have much patience and pushed myself a little too hard but after a couple of weeks I stayed mostly

in bed, going out only in the afternoons for some tea, a little wine, and the company of my friends.

How is father? He appended some thoughts at the end of two of your letters but didn't say much. How are the two of you doing? I think about your relationship with each other more and more, and wonder how you have maintained your happiness. I know he is a good man in many ways but cannot imagine playing the supportive but lesser role you have found fulfilling. Please don't misunderstand and read this as critical of you in any way. I simply think women are changing. We make our men icons. Every twenty years or so women start making real progress in equalizing the state of affairs between men and women when, suddenly, there's another war and the icon worship begins all over again. I think I'll suggest this to Sophie as a thesis topic. She's in graduate school in New York.

Yes, I had a wonderful time in Spain and the south of France. I saw bullfights in Spain with some mean spirited people I used to like, and the most beautiful places in the world in the south of this country. I did get over to Monte Carlo, which I found to be less than I expected, and went further, into Italy, to San Remo. I returned there many times. The French can be warm, but the Italians on the Riviera are like good friends after fifteen minutes and remember you when you go back. Also, the "classes" mix better in Italy than they do in France. I went to parties in San Remo that reminded me of afternoons at Gertrude Stein's -- all types, from rich to impoverished, talented to boring, young to elderly, well dressed to clothes slept in three straight nights. One local man, who perpetuates the probable myth that he is descended from the Fabrini family, puts food in his jacket pockets before leaving a party; everyone sees him do it, he sees them watch him do it, and no one cares, as he is always invited back. In France, the cognoscenti are more discriminating, preferring the company of like-minded and like-born party companions. At one dinner party near Antibbe, I saw a well-known writer I met once before and became friendly with him.

I am happy that you and father want to visit again in the Spring. I sense a degree of resignation in his appendices to your letters, that he is growing accustomed to my being here and not there, even that he knows I can't conform to the role he mapped out for me. Give my love to my brothers. I write to them but never hear back. Maybe in your next letter you can explain that to me.

Love,

Hill

Maria Jolas knew a truth about Hillary's illness she never shared with her friend. After a month with little abatement of Hillary's symptoms, Maria shared with Gene the doctor's suspicions. They were seated at a table in the middle of a restaurant dining room. Although Maria didn't know anyone else who ate at that particular place, she glanced around the room anxiously, not wanting their conversation to be overheard.

"The doctor told me there is nothing physically wrong with her," she told her husband.

Gene poured himself another glass of wine and thought this over. "Don't be ridiculous," he said. "She has a fever. She vomits and has cramps and flatulence." He too glanced around the room. Gene Jolas was refined, and prided himself on his discretion.

Maria sensed his discomfort and covered his hand reassuringly with her own. It was a rare intimate gesture. "To be sure she's sick, Gene. The doctor only said there isn't a physical cause for it."

Gene was impatient with this. "What does the man think it is then?"

"Well . . . Maria hesitated. "He thinks it is what a doctor of the mind, a friend of his, calls 'hysteria'."

"She's perfectly calm, for God's sake," Gene scoffed.

"Gene. You know this doctor. He is conservative, careful with what he says. But he told me there are hysterias that manifest themselves in the body, not in one's behavior, and that while he too was once skeptical about it, he is convinced it is true."

Gene maintained a cynical frown. "Well, what in the name of Christ does one do for that? If it is true," he added.

"Nothing, according to him. He told me he has heard of cases of priests walking into town from rural monasteries whose faces become disfigured and bloated, presumably from the conflict between their vows and the anticipation of carnal thoughts they knew they would have when they saw the town women."

Gene's reply was sarcastic. "Well, Hillary has certainly taken no vows I know of, and from what you tell me, which I suspect is a fraction of the truth, Hillary is way beyond carnal thoughts." He smiled sympathetically at his wife. "All right, what can we do?"

"Well, short of seeing one of the new doctors who explore the mind, which I grant Hillary wouldn't consider at all, we can only wait and see. The doctor doesn't think it's serious and suggests we just remain loving friends sensitive to her moods."

Gene patted his wife's hand. "Well, I for one think she's got an illness the good doctor can't diagnose, so he's falling back on this mental business to cover himself. She'll get better, you'll see."

"I hope so," Maria whispered with enough breath to bend the candle flame on the table between them. "I do hope so."

Hillary was always a little depressed during America's Thanksgiving holiday, the only one she remembered as a happy time for her at home. Emigre Paris ignored the holiday entirely. Apparently the Hemingways did not, for she received a brief note from Hadley asking her to join them and Bumby for a "traditional feast." Hillary's note back merely said "no thank you" and politely inquired about Hadley's health and happiness. No mention of Hem. Hillary had heard from Dos in early October, a long letter full of romantic allusions which she must have thrown away. A few weeks later she heard

from him again, a short note which said only that he was returning to New York to complete *Manhattan Transfer* and would be back in Europe the following spring. Throughout the late fall and winter of 1924 Hillary heard nothing from Scott. She was sure he was busy getting *Gatsby* published. She missed him and resisted the urge to find out how she could get in touch with him.

She may have wanted desperately to avoid Hemingway, but she kept running into people in his life who had heard about her from him, including Kitty Connell, the inspiration for Frances Clyne in *The Sun Also Rises*. Kitty and Hillary met at a Christmas party thrown by Gertrude Stein on December 26. Hillary liked Kitty but was not fond of Harold Loeb, Kitty's companion. She would not learn until a few months later that once again her opinion of someone was identical to Hemingway's. She noted Loeb's caustic remarks about Hem. For this reason as much as any, she was stunned when, in March, she went to a party at Loeb's apartment and found Hem and Hadley there. Kitty had not told her Hem would be there although Hillary had certainly said enough to make clear her changed feelings about him. The evening's festivities were notable for two reasons: Hillary's first conversation with Hem about Scott Fitzgerald, and the presence of Pauline and Jinny Pfeiffer.

Hillary noticed Pauline and her fashionable sister immediately, and also espied Hemingway's not so furtive glances at Pauline all evening long. There was a hint of chemistry between him and Pauline that accounted in part for Hillary's confession to Hem that evening about her brief love affair with Fitzgerald. Did she want to make him jealous, either in a physical or romantic sense? Or did she want him to know that a real writer could be her friend and achieve intimacy with her without turning on her in a vile

way? Whatever the explanation, the letter Hillary wrote to me that spring, which dealt with little else but the party at Loeb's apartment, mentioned the attraction Hemingway demonstrated for Pauline Pfeiffer and that she confessed to Hemingway her indiscretion with Fitzgerald. "It was quite repulsive," she wrote, "the way he kept coming back to Pauline throughout the evening, both alone and with Hadley, asking her about her upbringing in the South, Arkansas I think, and about her situation -- where she was living, how long she was staying over, where she had met Kitty. You know, really doing research on the girl. She's all right, by the way. Short, black hair, tall and thin, a wonderful sense of humor. What I liked most was that she didn't just fall down on her knees and pray at the Hemingway shrine. She was obviously attracted to him but I doubt he knew how much. He was far too busy giving off his own mating call."

Toward the end of the evening, when everyone was drunk, Hillary approached Hemingway. She thought it interesting how he succeeded in avoiding her all evening. March of 1925 was the first time since the prior September that Hillary truly felt like herself again physically and she submitted completely to the festive atmosphere of Loeb's party, drinking a lot of wine for the first time in nearly a year. When she approached him, she had to concentrate to avoid swaggering.

"How have you been, Mr. Hemingway?" she asked, smiling sweetly.

"Working hard," he said, and distractedly looked around the room.

"She's in the other room," Hillary said.

"For God's sake, who's 'in the other room'?"

"Why . . . Miss Pfeiffer, of course!" Hillary said cheerily.

Hemingway ignored her seeming clairvoyance. "How have you been?" he said

gruffly. "Gertrude tells me you've been ill."

Hillary avoided the temptation to comment on his absence. Through the haze of an early morning and too much drink, it occurred to her that Hadley may have invited her to visit them in November at his urging. "I'm recovered, Mr. Hemingway . . ."

"What's this 'Mr. Hemingway' shit."

"As I said," and Hillary stopped for a moment, feeling the room moving around her, "I have recovered from a strange fever my doctor says is prevalent in Africa these days. But I've never been to Africa. I spent the summer in St. Raphael."

"Really? Dos was there in August." August, the month she spent seducing Fitzgerald. Hillary said nothing. "Actually, he was in Cap d'Antibbe for a month before going back to the States. I think he's completely smitten with you."

She saw Pauline reenter the room and noticed Hemingway glance to his right, and then look quickly back at her, as if caught in the act. "Funny I didn't see him. I spent a good deal of time in Antibbe. I met a writer there. We became good friends."

"What writer?" Hemingway asked suspiciously.

"F. Scott Fitzgerald, the author of . . ."

Hemingway interrupted her. "I know who he is. So you became good friends, did you?"

Hillary looked Hem straight in the eyes, clenched her fists for courage, and said, "We became lovers."

"You what?" he asked harshly.

"I didn't think the word was ambiguous, Hem, but perhaps I wasn't clear. I encouraged Mr. Fitzgerald to come to my bed, and he did."

Hemingway's eyes blazed at her with contempt but he didn't speak. His body was suddenly rigid, and relaxed only slightly when Hadley walked up beside him and leaned forward to kiss Hillary on the cheek. Hadley probably figured that whatever reason her husband had stated for avoiding Hillary that evening was now moot. "Let's go, Hash," he told her. Hadley ignored him and asked Hillary how she was feeling, and the two women talked for a couple of minutes while Hemingway stood next to his wife, frozen with anger. When the women finished catching up, he calmly said goodnight to Hillary, asked Hadley if she was leaving with him, and started for the door without waiting for a response. Hadley kissed Hillary on the cheek and followed him out.

Hillary didn't know its source, but she was quite sure the emotion Hemingway displayed that night was jealousy. She preferred to think he was jealous of another man making love to her. Upon reflection, however, Hillary knew quite well that her intimacy with Fitzgerald was not the issue. It was Fitzgerald himself, a talented writer who had succeeded to a degree Hemingway then only hoped for, the man who represented, more than any other, the emigre American writer in the imaginations of his countrymen.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Through the spring Hillary became stronger. By May she felt like the mercurial illness that lasted all winter had never happened, grateful that her recuperation coincided with her favorite time of year in Paris. She spent more time than ever with Gertrude. Even Alice Toklas warmed to her, comfortably leaving her large paramour alone with Hillary in the Luxembourg Gardens in the afternoons after lunch. Gertrude hated walking, preferring to perch on a wide park bench and talk while people strolled past. Yet Hillary was amazed by the large woman's quick gait along the few short blocks to and from her apartment to her favorite spot under a tree a few hundred feet from the entrance to the gardens. Gertrude seemed to know everything on Hillary's mind before Hillary could articulate her thoughts, and took great pleasure in Hillary's surprise when she asked a question about something she could not have known about. One afternoon the two women sat in silence for a long while before Stein coughed heavily, looked at Hillary, and asked her what she thought of *The Great Gatsby*. Stein cocked her head to one side and stared at Hillary.

"Uh . . . I don't know," Hillary fumbled. "Someone told me it was published in the States last month but I haven't seen it."

"Come, come, my dear. You know quite well I wasn't asking what you thought about it from reading it, but from what the author told you about it." Stein smiled smugly and waited, but Hillary didn't react. She merely looked thoughtfully at the woman and furrowed her brow.

"I think Daisy is supposed to resonate in a woman like me . . . or you. I'll have to read the book I think, because Daisy left me cold. What do you think, Gertrude?"

Never to be outdone in the minor or major chess moves of relationships, Stein showed no disappointment over her failed contretemps and shrugged. "I haven't heard much of it apart from friends in New York who say Scribners is going to promote it heavily. I know Max thinks it one of the best things written in years."

So, Hillary thought, she knows all about St. Raphael. She wondered just how much Stein did know, and how she found out things. The woman seemed to have a remarkable intelligence network. "I haven't seen Scott Fitzgerald since last summer," she said, laying the bait.

"Really?" Stein said with exaggerated surprise. "He's in Paris, you know."

"I didn't, no."

"It seems odd to me that a fine writer like Scotty would be here when he should be over there helping to get his new book promoted."

"Maybe he doesn't do it for fame or money," Hillary said quietly.

"For what then, dear?"

"Simply to be rid of it perhaps. Often, after I finished a poem, the pleasure was not so much a sense of completion as much as it was relief at being rid of a burden."

"You are a bright girl, Hillary. Indeed you are."

On May 14th a letter was delivered to Hillary's apartment. She was not surprised to see Fitzgerald's handwriting on the envelope. The letter said that he and Zelda were residing permanently at 14 rue de Tilsitt, that they had been spending all their time with Gerald and Sara Murphy, and that he wanted to call on her that afternoon and take her for a drink. The messenger, who stood in Hillary's doorway looking distracted and uncomfortable, was instructed to wait for her reply. She wrote "See you here at 5" at

the bottom of the note, folded it, and handed it back to the messenger with five francs.

She was nervous the whole day about seeing Scott and wondered if Stein's inferential knowledge of her relationship with him, and Hemingway's anger about it, would change the way she behaved. Their disapproval imparted to what was for her merely a series of interludes with a famous and disturbed man a quality of seriousness she never intended it to have, as if he were a lover instead of an experiment.

When he showed up five minutes early, she could see he had been drinking already, but only because he was relaxed and affable instead of painfully serious. He showed no interest in staying in Hillary's apartment and suggested they go to the Dingo right away. It was a fateful choice, for after trying for more than a year to meet Hemingway, Fitzgerald finally did meet him at the Dingo that afternoon. Hemingway was there with a couple Hillary had never seen before. Expecting a growl or a mean sidelong glance from him, Hillary decided to act as if no ill feelings had ever existed between them. Hemingway stood as she and Fitzgerald approached his table and gave Hillary a big grin. The look he gave Scott was playful.

"Hillary . . . uh . . . Mr. Fitzgerald. Meet Duff Twysden and Pat Guthrie. Pat is Duff's cousin, I am told." He grinned broadly at Duff and Pat and everyone sat down. Hemingway stared at Scott, his expression changing from playful to sardonic. As the silence grew, the atmosphere became uncomfortable. Years later, Hillary wondered whether Hemingway was at that moment inventing the fiction he promoted in *A Moveable Feast* that Scott did not enter the Dingo that afternoon with a woman but rather with a friend of Scott's from Princeton named Duncan Chaplin. Hillary told me about the good laugh she had when Duncan Chaplin recalled for someone's biographer

that he had not even been in Europe in 1925. Yet despite the incongruity between the details of the famous meeting and Hemingway's later reconstruction of it, the patronizing and condescending attitude toward Fitzgerald that Hemingway displayed became a central element in the relationship they would have with each other until Hemingway killed the friendship entirely. Fitzgerald, on the other hand, revered Hemingway and their first meeting only buttressed his awe of the man and the writer. The behaviors of the two men that afternoon fortified Hillary's supposition that the primary difference between them was that Hem liked to get laid and Scott preferred to get drunk.

This most famous first meeting of two great writers began badly.

"Waiter?" Scott called out. The man moved up beside him and stood with his pencil ready.

"Yes, sir?"

"A bottle of the Vouvre Cliquot. The '19, please."

"Vintage, no less," Hemingway muttered.

"So nice of you, Mr. Fitzgerald," Duff said obsequiously.

"Yes, very impressive." Hemingway's disdain was obvious to Hillary.

"How is the book coming, Scott?" Hemingway asked.

Fitzgerald did not at first know what he was referring to – the book he had just begun to outline on paper, or *Gatsby*. He concluded it must be the latter. "They are keen on a publicity campaign right now, Ernest. I am pleased, of course. It comes out of their budget, not the book revenues."

"When will we have a chance to see it?" Duff asked.

"Soon, I suppose," Fitzgerald said absentmindedly. "You know, Ernest, these

issues are quite important. The selling of the thing and whose money goes to what endeavor. You must be careful that they don't just dump expenses that are really theirs on your shoulders." He picked up his double scotch and took a healthy swallow, then another, leaving the champagne untouched.

Hemingway swallowed champagne and smiled appreciatively at his glass. "Nice of you to offer advice, Scott. Damn nice of you."

Hillary saw very clearly what was happening. Scott was only trying to help Hemingway by giving him the benefit of his experience. Hem assumed he was doing something else entirely – pointing out to him his success, both in having his novel published and its economic prospects – to show him who was the superior writer. Hillary knew that Fitzgerald wanted only to show his high regard for Hemingway, not to rub his success or money in Hemingway's face. She watched as Hemingway closely observed Scott's looks and demeanor. He'll think them effeminate, she thought to herself. And conclude that Scott is weak. He is, she admitted, but not for any of the reasons Hemingway could have guessed after only a few minutes of conversation.

Despite these miscues and mistaken inferences, the two writers' respect for each other as writers was discernible and Hillary was pleased many months later, when Gertrude told her the two men saw each other often during the ensuing weeks and even traveled to Lyon together to pick up the Renault Scott had left there for repairs.

Hillary's affair with Fitzgerald began to bother her. It was not that he was married or that he was the most recent in a long list of men, save Dos Passos, who seemed only to have to ask to be invited into her bed. Hillary was as amoral as her father. Nor was it disappointment over her inability to make more of the experience with Fitzgerald than

seemed possible. Something Stein said to her that spring gave her the first clue.

"I have observed," the woman intoned, "little relationship in men between talent and strength." Stein started to go on but Hillary interrupted her.

"It seems all the men I know here have talent," Hillary said.

"Exactly."

"Am I drawn to talent or am I afraid of strength?" she asked.

"It could be neither."

"But not likely . . ."

"You might ask yourself the question," Stein said.

Hillary was impatient when confronted by an unanswered question about herself. This time her answer was to ignore men and begin to learn how to paint. This new direction was not chosen because of Hemingway's optimistic allusion to Rosetti. It was borne of an urge that had been growing since she started visiting Stein's place. She took private lessons from a local painter in his 50's from whom she learned the basic techniques of working with oil, but she broke off the lessons when he began making crude sexual overtures to her. The issue Stein articulated was constantly on her mind. Hillary was determined not just to answer the question whether she was inherently attracted to weak men, but to explore a larger issue it raised about the evolution of womens' consciousness and its impact on relationships with men in general.

"This is not just a syllogism," she wrote to Bernard Lee.

Strong men dominate women; women who want equality with men cannot find it with strong men; therefore, the developing woman must have dominating relationships with weak men and thereby feel more equal. This logic doesn't appeal to me, not because of what it suggests about myself but because the implications are too disturbing. I cannot

deny that I have rejected only three men I assessed to be strong: a student at the Sorbonne, Dos Passos, and Hemingway. Nor do I deny the pleasure my sexual power gives me, which is as great as the physical act itself. I think I am moved toward a political view of relationships, and perceive sexuality as the medium through which the political relationship between men and women is expressed. I also think that self-esteem is at the core of sexuality. My encounter with Fitzgerald has nothing to do with this conclusion; it is based on self-analysis. I am sexually satisfied only when the inward look is pleasing.

She talked to Stein about these ideas, not because she wanted her to validate them but because she wanted to know if the concept that relationships are based mostly on sexual politics was valid in the homosexual world. Stein liked the theory but told Hillary she didn't think it was original.

"I'm not suggesting I invented it," Hillary said defensively.

"Which isn't to say it isn't interesting, Hillary, only derivative."

"What about women with women?"

"That would be original, I think. It removes gender. And yes, I think it works in both spheres equally well. But with women the politics is more at a metaphorical level."

Hillary didn't prod Stein. She would never have invaded the relationship between Stein and Toklas. Hillary offered me a morsel of her thoughts at that time. I was not happy with the way things were going for me just then, and Hillary's letter didn't help matters.

Dear _____:

Have you ever thought of the sexual relationship between men and women as a political process? I have. Men need to demonstrate their emergence from the womb. In their adult lives they use their relationships with women to prove they have accomplished the task. Women are no better. They feel inherently inferior, helpless, dependent, and use their sexuality as a substitute for intellect, as a panacea for feelings of helplessness. Why don't we all wake up and see relationships as they really are -- battlegrounds.

You want to conquer me; I don't want that. I want to conquer him; he accepts my overture because he feels that since I am weaker he can reverse the momentum with a whimper, a tear, a seemingly heartfelt confession. Words are rooks, knights, bishops and pawns. When are they going to be simple lifelines between people who need and want and love?

My best,

Hillary

It would have been wise for Hillary to develop a connection between her own behavior and the theory about the nature of relationships she was elaborating. Had she done so she might have avoided a lot of pain. Also, all the theorizing didn't help her at all in her ambiguous relationship with Hemingway.

One sunny and unusually muggy Sunday in August she was sitting in the Luxembourg Gardens with Stein and Toklas. They were talking about children. Like the scarab on Dr. Jung's window, at the exact moment they sat, Hillary saw Hemingway walking toward them, his feet shuffling slowly to permit his son, whose hand he held, to keep pace. Stein and Hemingway weren't getting along too well at the time and Toklas, who never liked Hemingway, made no effort to acknowledge him when he and his son approached the park bench. Bumby, inexplicably fond of Stein, ran over to her and crawled up onto the bench beside her. Hillary slipped Stein a small piece of hard candy wrapped in white paper. Stein nodded appreciatively at her and opened the candy for Bumby, who grabbed it. They all laughed, even Alice Toklas, and Stein and Hillary glanced at each other with the same thought. "Just as rude and aggressive as his father," Stein said, winking at Hillary. Hemingway was distracted and didn't hear the remark. Hillary noticed he was uncomfortable.

"Mind watching Bumby for a few minutes, Gertrude?" he asked. "I want to talk to Hillary."

"Of course not, Ernest," the woman said stiffly. Bumby was putting sticky fingers on Toklas' arm and she was trying to be patient with him.

Hemingway and Hillary started down a verdant path off the main avenue. He started talking right away. "I'm sorry about Pamplona . . . and losing my temper at Loeb's apartment. I was disappointed in you is all."

Hillary stopped and squinted at him. She was furious. "You try to fuck me" Hemingway winced, "and then tell me you're disappointed in me because I went to bed with Fitzgerald?"

"It is hypocritical. You're not the only one who's disappointed me, though. Duff screwed Harold Loeb."

"So what?" Hemingway had seen her looking at him and Duff at the Dingo and should have known she wouldn't give a damn.

"Harold Loeb's an asshole and Duff is a fine woman."

"You'll get over it," Hillary said coldly. But something occurred to her. "Has Duff 'screwed' you too, Hem?" she asked.

Hemingway stopped walking and turned to face her. "No," he said quietly, "she hasn't."

Hillary's anger disappeared. She could not maintain it with him then any more than she ever could. "There's turmoil in your life," she said.

"There's goddam turmoil in everyone's life, including mine." He was angry, but not at her.

"Turmoil with Hadley?"

"We're OK, we're just fine." They started walking back along the sun dappled path toward the main avenue where they had left Bumby with Stein and Toklas. "I don't like to talk about my pain," he said as they walked.

"That's not news."

Hemingway glanced at her and smiled. "The only thing that matters to me is the work. So much gets in the way of the work."

"How about women?" she asked.

He stopped. Hillary continued walking a few steps before turning. "I'm not as bad as you think when it comes to women. I want love like everybody else."

"Hadley loves you. But it's never that simple, is it?" They walked on in silence.

At the juncture of the main path of the park and the narrower one they had taken, Hillary saw Stein in the distance sitting contentedly, watching Bumby play on the ground with a stick. Alice was reading a book. Before parting from her, Hemingway asked if he was forgiven for his behavior on the hilltop above Pamplona. "Forgiven and forgotten," Hillary said. "We're pals, remember?"

"Yeah." He walked up to Stein, who looked past him at Hillary with a question on her face. "Ernest only wanted to apologize to me," she told her. Hemingway ignored this and busied himself with Bumby's things. Standing, he bid them farewell.

"He is quite a handsome man," Stein said and sighed, causing Alice to look at her suspiciously. Hillary told the women she had to leave and asked Stein if she wanted help getting back to her apartment. Stein said no, pointed to a book on the bench between her and Alice and told Hillary she would be fine, Alice was always there

to help her. Hillary thought the last comment was a coded apology to Alice.

As Hillary entered her apartment that afternoon the telephone was ringing and she ran to the instrument and picked it up. Dos Passos' warm voice told her he was in Paris but would only be there for a few days. His evening was free and would she join him for dinner? Hillary was happy to hear from him. She suggested they meet at Jimmy's at eight o'clock for a drink and from there decide where to have dinner. Later, as she bathed and set her hair she thought about Dos, why he held no romantic or physical interest for her. Her previous experience showed there was no specific "type" of man to whom she was attracted. Picasso was, after all, Spanish. Dos Passos a Mexican. She found herself actually becoming excited by the prospect of spending an evening with Dos Passos. He was a mystery, however unmysterious. At Jimmy's, Dos sat at the bar where it curved toward the back, allowing him to see anyone entering, and got up to greet her before she saw him. He held her by the shoulders and kissed each cheek, and when his mouth hesitated above her lips she pushed them up to meet his. They were large, soft, and moist. He kissed well but she still felt no heat. He took her around to the far side of the bar and from memory ordered her a whiskey and soda.

"It is so good to see you."

"Me too, Dos. This has been quite a day for me, seeing Ernest in the afternoon and you in the evening."

"You saw Ernest today? I was with him this morning briefly."

Hillary frowned. "Odd that he didn't mention you were in Paris . . ."

"Ernest is funny that way."

"Sure he is. Perhaps seeing you is what caused him to want to look me up, to

offer a belated apology."

"Did he apologize?" Dos asked, surprised.

"Yes, although he told me something I did had disappointed him and . . ." Hillary remembered the other thing Hemingway had told her, "he was really upset about Duff Twysden. He told me she 'screwed' Harold Loeb. That really got him going. Do you know why?"

Dos was uncomfortable. His friend Hemingway had always told him things he told few others and Dos didn't want to betray his friend's trust merely to satisfy Hillary's curiosity. So he chose his words carefully. "Many men love their wives and are unfaithful to them from time to time. Ernest loves his wife but now and then he falls in love with someone else. But I am sure he never does anything about it." Hillary knew he shared her opinion of Hadley.

She was fascinated. "You make it sound like an occasional flirtation, nothing more."

"Ernest's machismo is an outer shell. I think he falls in love with other women simply to see if they will fall in love with him. If they do, he's still a man."

"It validates him?"

"Yes, I suppose." Dos didn't enjoy talking about his friend that way. "This is only my opinion you understand?. Perhaps I should not speculate, but I know Ernest likes you so I assume there is no risk in my doing so."

Hillary squeezed his hand resting on the bar. "Your secrets are safe."

Dos Passos' look grew serious. He told her he had gone to see Hemingway that morning for only one reason, to talk him out of publishing a book he had written.

"What book?"

"It is called *Torrents of Spring*, a horrible parody of Sherwood Anderson's *Dark Laughter*."

"I read the book. I imagine Ernest could do quite a good parody of it."

"Oh yes, it is well done all right. I've read most of it. It doesn't just pillory an aging writer to whom Ernest owes a great deal. Gertrude Stein is in it, and so is Hadley, and I think one other behind the mask. It is more mockery than parody. I told Ernest he's only using the book as a vicious attempt to free himself from what he thinks is an unfair debt to Anderson."

"What did he say?"

"He told me it is only intended to be funny and is not an attack on anyone. Then he asked me if it is funny."

"Is it?"

"Yes, some parts are wickedly humorous. Hadley's opposition to its publication surely means it will be published."

"Do you think he'd allow me to read it?" Then she felt embarrassed.

"You could ask," Dos allowed, "but I would not be optimistic. I sense someone is pushing him behind the scenes." Hillary asked who, and Dos Passos told her he had no idea. "And worse," he said, "in my opinion *Torrents* has gotten in the way of the novel he wants to do."

"You're a good friend," Hillary said, changing the subject. She had had enough of Hemingway for one day. "How long are you in Paris?"

They talked for another hour, Dos Passos taking thimble-full sips of one glass of

whiskey while Hillary drank two. He noticed she would let the glass sit untouched until the ice melted and then put the drink away in three or four swallows. Hillary told him she hadn't been to Michauds in a long time, so they went there to eat. She didn't learn much that night about the mystery of men and women. In Pamplona, Dos Passos had made his desire for her quite clear and she had felt no interest. That night Dos Passos didn't once suggest a desire to promote the evening into anything but a reunion of two friends, and this backing away from her did not arouse in Hillary any desire for him. As she prepared for bed that night she scratched around her mental list of factors that had influenced the direction relationships took between herself and various men. Dos Passos gazing at her on a warm night under the dogwood trees in a small romantic town in Spain, his desire almost a separate creature sitting at the table with them, was no different than Dos Passos sitting across the table from her in a Paris restaurant giving her only sincere conviviality. Strength in him was a constant, whether he showed her the vulnerable side of his personality or the strong, independent one.

The next day Hillary received a letter from her mother which said that she and her father were postponing their European trip until the fall. Not only would it mean a delay in seeing her daughter, she wrote, but she understood the weather in October was unpredictable and often wet and cold. For the first time in her life Hillary began to see her mother as someone growing old, someone concerned about the minor inconveniences of a chill in the air or rain in the evening.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Paris summer of 1925 was unusually hot, much too stultifying for the sawmill room where, in August, Hemingway began putting together *The Sun Also Rises*, his roman a clef of two summers in Pamplona. He returned to de Lilas in the mornings to write, where it was cool behind the terrace awnings and under the ceiling fans. In late August Hillary met him there for lunch. At first she didn't want to hear about another of his trips to Pamplona and Burguete, but when she perceived the connection between that summer's menagerie and the story he was working on, she let him talk. Hillary loved to listen to Hemingway talk when he was sober. "It was a hell of a mess," he told her. "Burguete has been fouled, the fishing's no good anymore, and Duff and Pat never made it. They caught up with us in Pamplona, with Loeb and Bill and Don. Pamplona isn't the same either but it was a helluva good time anyway."

"You asked Harold Loeb along? I thought you were finished with him." Hillary asked.

"It made things interesting. Maybe you don't know about Duff and Pat, but they're more than kissing cousins you see. It was not malicious at all though, if that's what you're thinking." Hillary shook her head. "I told Harold that Duff and Pat were coming along. Anyway," he said, waving his hand as if to dismiss any complicity on his part in the events that followed, "we were having drinks one Friday afternoon and in the middle of a conversation with Duff, Harold sends her a signal or something and the two of them go off together, surely to Harold's room, and Harold comes back to the restaurant but Duff doesn't. Next morning she doesn't show up until lunch and is bruised up pretty badly."

"Harold beat her?"

"No, of course not. Pat must have punched her up pretty good though. She was a mess. Anyway, Loeb got very excited about it. I told him Duff fell against the railing on the veranda and to cool off, but the atmosphere was nasty as hell, almost as nasty as Pat was toward Loeb. But Loeb wouldn't let it lie and that night he got really abusive. I told him to lay off and Pat told him to get the hell out of there, but what did he do? He appealed to Duff for help. For Christ's sake, he went running to a woman to protect him," Hemingway said with contempt. Hillary kept quiet. "So I said something. The next thing you know he asks me to 'step outside'."

"He what?" Hillary asked. Hemingway, she knew, could fold Loeb twice and put him on a shelf.

"Yeah, it was pretty pathetic. I shouldn't have called him a lousy bastard. We went outside. He put his glasses in his jacket pocket and took it off, put it down on the ground out of the way. But you know something? At that moment my contempt for the son of a bitch just dissolved. He said he didn't want to hit me and I told him I didn't want to hit him either."

"What happened?"

"Nothing. We just went back into the restaurant, and the mood got a little better after that. I wrote him a note the next morning apologizing for what I said to him."

Hillary was far more perceptive than Hemingway gave her credit for. She saw his malice quite clearly, the way he had engineered a gathering that inevitably would lead to a clash between the anti-Semitic Pat Guthrie and the Jew his cousin-lover had seduced, a perfect substitute for Hemingway, who had been equally enraged by Loeb's

sexual conquest of "Lady" Duff Twysden. Hillary kept her thoughts to herself.

"You know how Hadley loves the bullfights, right?," Hemingway said, changing the subject. "We went to Madrid alone, after the fiesta in Pamplona, and Juan Belmonte dedicated a fight to us. At the end he presented Hash with the damned bull's ear!" Hemingway laughed loudly, as did Hillary, unable to imagine Hadley holding a blood-drenched ear from a dead bull's head. "She wrapped it neatly in a handkerchief and put it in her bureau drawer at the hotel."

"It seems at least one of you had a good time."

"Well, yes, sure." From his tone, she thought, Hemingway wasn't so sure. "I'm sorry to go on about it like this. Recollecting the past can be a comfort. You know?"

This brief breach of Hemingway's bravado surprised Hillary. Later she thought it was fueled entirely by guilt. He never mentioned another woman but she discerned there was someone in his life besides Hadley, someone with whom he had sinned, the guilt from which he might assuage by nearly admitting he was in pain and alluding to what he could not bring himself to discuss openly. Hillary correctly guessed that it was not Duff Twysden. Of the remaining possibilities she knew, or knew about, Hillary supposed it had to be Pauline or Jinny Pfeiffer. The contrast between either woman and Hadley was stark. They were younger and pencil thin, with the sort of glamour Hillary thought would appeal to Hemingway. Hadley had not gotten back her figure after Bumby was born. Hillary knew things like that mattered a lot to Hemingway. Duff had been nothing more than what Dos Passos described as a benign "love." She played with Hemingway and didn't seriously want him. As Hillary and everyone else would learn, Pauline Pfeiffer took dead aim at the writer and wouldn't be satisfied until she

replaced the wife Hemingway's friends loved so much.

Shortly after the day she had lunch with Hemingway, Hillary wrote to Dos. She had been thinking a great deal about the change in his attitude towards her.

Dear Dos:

It was so good to spend that evening with you last week and I hope you'll call every time you come to Paris so we can be better friends. We didn't spend much time on what you're doing, what I'm doing, and I think we could be closer if we found our common interests rather than dwell on gossip about others. Ernest told me a vulgar little tale about his last trip to Spain and I can understand the mentality behind *Torrents*.

Sometimes I see myself as I fear others see me -- a kind of vessel for their disillusionments and frailties, rather than a person who has her own story to tell, or at least her own illusions to suffer. Ernest used to show concern for my development as a person with a talent for writing verse but doesn't bother anymore. Gertrude Stein cares, though, and only to her, and now to you, have I addressed my desire to paint. My interest in art serves another immediate purpose, since mother and father are visiting in a couple of months, and I can confidently assure them that for anyone interested in painting, Paris is where one should be. They sense I'm never coming home again, but I must supply them with a reason, as the ones I've suggested in my letters aren't convincing. Father is a lost cause, but I care that my mother see something beyond indifference to their values and their lives and what she undoubtedly considers my escape from responsibility and family.

You have told me nothing about yourself, the work you are doing. Ernest jokes about serious lost causes and a political side of you I haven't seen, but also has allowed that you are a real original. You must tell me about these things. You were so much the gentleman this last time, too much so I think. I know you were interested in me last summer and I could not tell whether your apparent disinterest last week was feigned, out of self-protection, or evidence of a real change of heart. I am not trying to flirt with you when I say that I want to know you better, and although I can make no predictions about the direction of my feelings, I am sure the more I know the closer we'll be. Besides, male friends mean a great deal more to me than male lovers; the former may last a lifetime, the latter are seldom more than a candle reduced to a glob of wax on the sideboard, the rudimentary wick trying hopelessly to stay aflame. Write to me when you can and be safe in your travels.

Fondly,

Hillary

Hillary's parents' October visit was worse than she feared. It was not her father who made it so difficult, but her mother, who spent much of her time crying over the "loss" of her daughter. Her father's concerns were more practical, and predictably centered on the question of money. He proposed a budget to her which she found offensive, since it was so modest that she knew he could not possibly expect her to live on it. He told her of trust funds he was establishing for her and her brothers, which would ensure their comfort when he and Gretchen were dead. Hillary told him she would take her share now, that she wasn't concerned about the future after their deaths, which would "take care of itself."

"You don't seem inclined to marry and have children, or any other normal activity for a woman of your position, so it is a little hard for me to imagine this certainty regarding your future." But then he softened a little. "Whether to give you money now or then doesn't only affect your life, Hillary. It has an impact on my own peace of mind." Her relationship with her father was predictable, based on mutual distrust, a constant tussle between like-minded people. Her mother was different, however, and Hillary spent the entire week trying to recapture the rapport she had known with her. The change was evident in Gretchen's more recent letters to Hillary. Hillary's mother felt betrayed. At the beginning of Hillary's emigration to France, Gretchen supported her daughter's frolic and endured Randolph's anger for that support because she was confident that Hillary, whom she recognized as different from other young women, needed a prolonged detachment from the world in which she was brought up. In 1923

she felt she knew her daughter well, that her intuition regarding Hillary's needs was to the point, and that after a year or two she would welcome her daughter home with a pride that she had helped her break free of a constraining environment to live a more or less traditional life infused with a more worldly outlook. Now she saw it differently, realistically, and the daughter she thought she knew so well was a complete stranger to her, no less so when Hillary paraded canvasses of rather ordinary looking street scenes out of a closet. Gretchen knew good art when she saw it and Hillary's crude oils weren't good. Her prejudice foreclosed any real appreciation of their potential.

Gretchen Malone saw the past and future close in upon her with a quickening pace, finally realizing how much she had counted on Hillary to give her something in her middle years to balance the sterile life she endured with Randolph, how much she wanted a relationship with a mature daughter. Her sons had grown and gone away. Even Tommy, who worked for Randolph and whose visits with a wife she did not like were infrequent and mechanically orchestrated to serve a business and social purpose more than a familial one, was a stranger. She sat in Hillary's apartment and listened to her daughter talk about her plan to learn how to paint, and listened to her chatter about a fat lesbian who lived with another woman and who held court every Saturday, about another lesbian who owned a bookstore, and about exciting new writers who lived in poverty but spent their summers in Spain watching bullfights. She felt herself sinking deeper and deeper into an abyss of loneliness and loss.

All week long Hillary did her best to accomplish two goals: lift her mother's spirits and convince her father to give her the money she wanted. She partially succeeded. On the third day of their visit they went shopping for paintings. Hillary's observations

were sensitive and informed and demonstrated even to her father that her new avocation was more serious than her paintings showed. She took them around to rue de Fleurus for an hour-long tea with Stein and Toklas. Gretchen was visibly uncomfortable, looking with fearful confusion at the great woman. Surprisingly, Randolph and Stein talked easily and comfortably about unlikely mutual friends in America, and a couple of Stein's remarks made him laugh louder and more genuinely than Hillary could remember. Hillary's father was keenly interested in Stein's private art collection, and the woman merely smiled at him patronizingly when monetary value, the real source of his interest, became clear.

"That is remarkable," Randolph said, putting his spectacles on again to observe, close-up, a Cezanne on Stein's wall.

"It is, yes," Stein replied with self-satisfaction. "The emotion it evokes . . ."

"Of course," Randolph said brusquely. "He is well-know?" Randolph, unlike Gretchen, knew nothing of art.

"Oh yes," Stein replied.

"And his paintings fetch a pretty penny, no doubt."

"If that is the focus of one's interest, I suppose that is so."

Randolph removed his glasses and put them in his suit jacket pocket. "You must have a fortune hanging on just this one wall."

"It is a fortune, Mr. Malone. Truly."

Alice Toklas, as usual, didn't do much more than sit quietly and watch the timid American woman and her shallow husband go through the motions of visiting that afternoon. At last, Randolph took his watch from a vest pocket, snapped the lid, and

frowned.

"We must be going, Miss Stein. I'm afraid we have many more things to do this afternoon."

The relief on Gretchen's face was so obvious it was almost humorous. Hillary, rather than feel embarrassed, returned Stein's wink as Gretchen fumbled for words of thanks for "being a good friend for my daughter" and, contrary to all breeding, ignored Alice Toklas entirely as she rushed for the door.

Dear _____:

My God, you should have been here with me when I took mother and father to Gertrude's apartment. I was confident that she could give them a real sense of Paris today, share some insights, describe the art and the artists, make them feel better about my being here. Mother nearly passed out with fear. Father sized up the paintings in the parlor and I'm frankly surprised he didn't offer her a handsome sum for them so he could take them back home and hang them in some upstairs hall where they would never be seen again. Actually, Miss Stein and father hit it off pretty well. She figured out what kind of man he is in about three minutes, and he didn't care to figure out, and didn't, Gertrude's substance.

If mother and father ever chance to come this way again I assure you I will escort them to their very fine hotel, ask father to take me to dinner at the very best restaurants, walk with them through the Louvre, and call it a success. What an effort!

My best,

Hillary

Hillary wanted her parents to meet Hemingway but she could not get in touch with him during the remaining three days of their visit. Gretchen assumed he was some poor writer who had seduced her daughter and needed money, glad that Hillary's messages left all over town were not returned so that she would not have to meet the man. Hillary never mentioned the fact that he was married and had a young child and

this was an unfortunate omission, for if Gretchen had known that she would have relaxed. She was incapable of imagining her daughter in a compromising relationship with a married man. Randolph was not so naive, nor was he completely unmoved by the excitement of his daughter's life. In fact, he almost envied her freedom, the kind he always wanted his children to enjoy and which he had never known. They were to have lunch the day before Randolph and Gretchen's planned departure for London but Hillary's mother sent the maid to the sitting room with regrets she could not join them because of the severe headache she had been fighting all morning. Randolph sighed audibly. He looked forward to spending the time alone with his daughter.

Hillary took him to Select, figuring it just classy enough, just working class enough, to appeal to him. It did. He wanted to have a drink at the bar, and after they had two glasses of wine he insisted they eat their lunch there. He was enjoying himself, smiling at passers-by, trading tawdry jokes with the barman, and exhibiting a palpable pride in Hillary that she found completely astounding.

"All right, you're here, and staying here it seems," he said.

"I know you're not happy about it," she said quietly. Her feelings about her relationship with her father were not well thought out, but she didn't want to pander to his largesse either.

"You may find this hard to believe, Hillary, but I've changed my mind. I want you to do something with yourself other than hang around with the nearly great and almost great, I grant you, but I don't object to the *idea* of your being here. That is the difference between your mother and me."

"She's really suffering with all of this, isn't she?" Hillary asked sadly.

"Yes. You thought I had written you off because you rejected my way of life. I didn't. I haven't. Your mother has given up hope because you have rejected the idea that women are here to serve husbands and raise families, as she has done, and of course because she hoped you'd marry and live close by and give her lots of grandchildren to nurture."

"And you?" Hillary asked. Their food came and Randolph took a moment to sample the chicken and lightly sautéed, diced potatoes. He murmured appreciatively.

"We're alike, girl," he said. It reminded her of the way Scott spoke those words. "The difference is that I had to compromise myself to have money, I had to work hard for it, and you don't. But your contempt for our society, the one I adopted, is identical to mine. And your indifference to your family, although painful to your mother, and even me, is the same attitude I developed when I was a lot younger than you are. You don't want to have any more to do with Gretchen and me and our friends and your brothers than I wanted to have anything to do with my drunken father."

"But you loved grandma," Hillary said. She hated that her eyes filled with tears.

"Yes, I did." Hillary watched his jaw clench with emotion. "I loved my mother, but I was intolerant of her weakness, especially her obedience to duties which had nothing to do with anything that might improve her life."

"But you were her life."

"Yes, I suppose I was." Randolph was visibly uncomfortable now, and Hillary, not wanting to press him, changed the subject.

"What can I do for mother?"

"Not a damned thing. Look Hill," he said, leaning into the bar with his hands

clenched in front of him, "I don't pretend to know what this is all about over here." He unclenched his hands and spread them out on the bar in front of him, as if in supplication, "But I know, I think I know, when it's time to accept facts as they are, and I accept these."

"I'm not sure I know the facts."

"Thank God you see that, but you're here and you're staying, wherever it might lead. You know that and I know that, and, poor woman, Gretchen knows that."

"What about the money?" she asked.

"What about it?"

"I don't want the allowance you offered me. I can't live on it."

"I withdraw the demand. It's yours."

"What exactly is it that you're telling me is mine?"

Hillary's father leaned against the back of the bar stool, found it didn't give at all, and straightened up. "Let's put it this way. The trust fund I was going to give you limited access to will be yours as soon as I get back home. You write checks against the Bank of New York and they're paid. It's that simple."

"But shouldn't I have my own funds here? I will be responsible with your money. I don't plan to buy yachts and sink them off the coast of Italy."

"Just write the checks, Hillary, just write the checks." Randolph sighed deeply. "Unless you go completely crazy the funds will never run out. My accountant will balance the accounts, take care of the details. As I said, unless you act irresponsibly, there will always be money there. Always."

"That is generous, father, more than generous, but shouldn't I have some

accountability for my spending habits?"

"You know Myron in my office?" her father asked.

"Yes, of course."

"If you spend too much, he'll let you know."

"Father," Hillary began, and he could see her embarrassment, "don't misunderstand what I'm about to say, because I am very grateful for your change of heart. But the arrangement you describe doesn't give me any security at all. You could tell Myron at any time simply to cut me off."

Randolph smiled, his glance at her sardonic. Hillary noticed he wasn't the least bit agitated by her seeming distrust. "I wish you were in business with me rather than your brother."

"I was born probably a century too early for that."

"Maybe not . . ."

"Most definitely," Hillary said resolutely. "What about my concern?"

Randolph was still smiling at her. "Believe me or not, I thought you might come up with something like that. So I talked to my lawyer last night about it. He said he could arrange it so that the money is yours, in a trust I cannot revoke, with a standard established that gives it to you when you want it as long as it doesn't drain the corpus of the trust more than a certain percentage each year. But he didn't think it would be possible for you to reach the principal amount at all."

"How much are we talking about?" Hillary asked.

"My dear child, if I told you, which I won't, you wouldn't believe me."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

"You're all alike," Hemingway said gruffly. "You ask Daddy for money. Duff asks me for money."

They sat outside Rotonde in the chill October air. Hemingway was in a foul mood but she noticed he tried to control it. Yet he told her nothing that would explain it. He showed no patience for Hillary's story about the strange and sudden reversal in her relationship with her parents, nor did he care to elaborate on his barb concerning Lady Duff. "Hash and I are going to Schruns for a couple of months. Dos says he might join us. Want to come along?" She knew he didn't mean it by the way he said it, and told him so. "Really?" he rejoined sarcastically. It was not possible to communicate with him when he was like that. She drained her coffee cup, stood, and wished him a pleasant holiday. He said he would keep in touch. Hillary lowered her voice an octave to simulate his own, said "really?" as he had, and walked out.

A lot had happened before she walked out of the Rotonde that day. It was months since her illness evaporated in the misty silence of a Paris night. Hillary discovered impressionism. A friend sent her an invitation to a new gallery, and she went alone. She dressed chic with her hair piled atop her head, rivulets of curls hanging down on each side of her face. She loved the attention from the men, men of all ages, as she walked about the place and watched people, mostly in couples, do a waltz around the central hall of the old building. She ignored the men and concentrated on the paintings. Hillary had never seen anything like them but she liked what she saw, people in pictures out of synchronicity with reality, the colors brutal and engaging. When she rounded a corner and walked into a smaller room her eyes nearly filled with

tears when she read the card to the right of a small painting in front of her: Picasso. The last night she spent with him came back to her as she gazed at it and fused with its object, a woman laying supine below a window. The window framed a brightly lit tree surrounded by spring blossoms, but the woman lay under the window in the dark, with only her head and torso illuminated. Her head was thrown back in a passionate gesture, her left arm tucked under her arching head, black strands of hair cast loosely about plump round breasts. Her vagina was placed surrealistically just below the breasts. Only the light from the window stimulated her -- her hands were above her head and there was no other creature in the painting to whom one could attribute such blissful surrender.

What did it mean to be a woman impassioned but alone, neither stimulated by herself or any other, lying beneath a window filled with a small slice of the natural world? What did Pablo have in mind? Hillary moved on through the room, pretending interest in other paintings, even two more of Picasso's which were even more dramatic. But she kept her mind's eye on the woman beneath the window, and kept her thoughts on its mystery.

Before Hillary left the gallery it came to her. The painting was not magical. It represented a reality which played itself out every night and every morning all over the world. The source of the woman's passion was not mysterious, it was merely absent, and recently so. The painting was not about the woman at all, but about the lover who stole away at dawn's first light, leaving her there to quiver in her darkened bed still aglow from early morning pleasure before realizing that the sunrise illuminating the tree outside her window would soon bathe her in the loneliness of her own wretched

circumstance. Hillary shuddered. Picasso had painted his own existence through the reflection of a woman alone, a woman abandoned, one mistress among many who would feel the heat of his presence and the painful space left by his absence. In that one painting, he documented his past and forecast his future through the experience of those he had loved and cast off.

Hillary drank too much champagne that evening and slept late the next morning, waking fully clothed in her new Chanel dress, sprawled on top of the bed, shivering in the autumn air from an open window. Her head throbbed. She bathed and dressed quickly, ignoring how she felt, as she was due at Gertrude's at twelve and didn't want to be late. She wanted to ask her something. When she got there Stein could see she was suffering the effects of too much alcohol and offered Hillary beer. Someone had once told Stein that beer relieved the symptoms. Although she gagged on the sudsy liquid, Hillary accommodated her friend and drank it down, shuddered, and smiled at Stein. Alice wasn't at home.

"Gertrude, where is Picasso?" she asked.

"I really wouldn't know," Stein said stiffly. "He doesn't visit us any more." Hillary told her she knew that but guessed Stein might have information, or might at least have heard rumors. "I understand he was in Juan les Pins in July, with Olga and Paulo, her child," Stein said. Hillary noticed the pronoun. "As far as I know he's still there."

"I'll be there next summer. Again."

"It is quite lovely, I know, but I prefer to remain at home anymore."

"Gertrude?"

"Yes?"

"What do you really think of me?" Hillary's eyes were serious, and her lip didn't curl with the ironic twist it sported when she was being playful. Stein could tell she really wanted an answer. This wasn't banter.

"Why on earth do you care? I treasure you. You know how to enjoy life. You have a talent you don't use and, frankly, that offends me. But you are my friend. People think I have many, but in fact I have few."

"But what of the substance of Hillary Malone?"

"Oh, Hillary," Stein said with a sigh, "you're still looking for that, but your real substance is that you look for it at all." She frowned. "You're not going to the south this summer to find Pablo I hope."

"No. Why?"

"He is a great but terrible man." Hillary wanted to tell Stein about her encounter four years earlier, when she had first arrived in Paris, holding a sobbing Picasso in her arms in a dingy Montparnasse flat.

"I have no interest in pursuing him . . . or anyone else," she said. "I love it there. Maria Jolas has given me the name of a man with a house on the peninsula at Juan les Pins who will be away during June and July and who will rent me his villa for next to nothing, just to have someone look after the garden. I'm going to go there and really learn how to paint." She said it defiantly.

Stein observed her prideful stance and tone. "Do you really want to paint?"

"Why . . . yes, I do."

"Then go there and paint."

The house into which Hillary moved for the months of June and July was small

and stood in the middle of beautiful, somewhat overgrown gardens, down a long path from the main road. It was surrounded by larger estates on each side, neither of which could be seen but whose grounds provided a dense, rich buffer from the rest of the peninsula. The inside of the house was rustic but comfortable, with a large room in the middle, a well equipped kitchen at the back, a work room to the right, and a single bedroom on the left with tall casement windows on two sides overlooking shrubs and an ancient stone terrace. For her initial provisions she took a taxi to a country store on the west side of the peninsula, but after that she rode her bike along the coastal road to Antibe's central market, which afforded her a social as well as practical outing two or three days a week. Her neighbors visited her once, to welcome her and invite her to dine with them, leaving it to her to choose their company or remain by herself.

The first two weeks were so idyllic Hillary wondered how she could ever leave the place. She rose early each morning and had coffee and a cake or croissant on the terrace. Having tried the work room which her landlord used to make pottery, and finding the light inadequate, she ultimately set up her easel in a corner of the kitchen, which caught the morning light until early afternoon and captured a rosy, reflective glow late in the day. Unlearning what she had learned was important to her, and when she started out with a fresh canvas the third morning she nearly cried with frustration over where to begin. Sitting on a stool and talking aloud to the walls, she found herself staring at a collection of wooden spoons hanging to the right of the window. Their worn edges and rich texture against the white stucco wall seemed right. She liked the idea of starting with something simple and pure. Impressionism didn't interest her -- she wanted to represent what she saw, but also wanted to give it some quality, of light or

texture, something only she could see. Hillary thought of this additional factor as nothing more than a mood the object evoked in her that stood outside of and apart from the physical reality of the hanging spoons.

Four days later she took two steps back and looked at what she had finished with a sense of pride. They were just spoons hanging from a wall, but they reflected the luxuriant atmosphere of the kitchen and nearby gardens, appearing richer than they were, with hints of spring flowers and fragrant spices. At least she thought so. On her bicycle trip to town that day she decided she was not going to agonize over a completed picture -- if she was satisfied with it the moment she considered it finished, she would put it away and prepare for the next one. Her mother's and father's glances at each other during her exhibition of puerile first efforts haunted her, injecting a shimmer of doubt and self-abnegation. But Hillary was confident that the first effort with the spoons was good. She would grow stronger with time.

Dear _____:

I think this place and state of mind is where you would have wanted me to be if you could have done the selecting. I am happy here. The simplest, most basic routines form the backbone of a happy soul. I awaken, start the coffee pot, and walk into the garden behind the house where the birds, which have been awake for hours, dart back and forth above me in the trees and at a level on the terrace and amidst the flowers, picking up their pieces of string, ashen fluff, rainswept worms, and bits of sunlight. Sometimes I feel I am a part of their world and that they accept me into it.

My work is slow and painful. I make many mistakes and throw away a canvas when it has been so smudged with erasures that I cannot save what is left. I finished a picture I feel good about, and my God, how I feel. There is no conversation here, no pretense, not the least effort to impress a soul. Just coming face to face with my own talent, lack of talent, need, want, desire, all of that.

Do I have to leave? I don't want to but I will.

Fondly,

Hillary

Hillary told me later that the long moments suspended over the canvas had given her ample opportunity to reflect on what she was doing with her life. The periods of thought and doubt were striated clouds in an otherwise sunny sky, sun-dappled glades where the broad, leafy trees left magnified dropules of shade sprinkled around a sunny meadow. One moment she thought herself a whore; the next a bold voyager on a journey to some new plane of human behavior; or a failure for abandoning an art form which so many people had told her she held in her grasp; at yet other times she felt herself to be an explorer of new dimensions in the realm of relationships between men and women. But there in Juan les Pins these manufactured justifications for living without regard for consequences seemed entirely hollow, as if she were saying a hail Mary on the way through the confessional's curtain while thinking about the engorged member of the boy waiting for her on the steps outside the church. Hillary desperately wanted to find substance and meaning, either her own or the kind that projects itself upon the lives of other, more enobled people who called France home.

Had she not been so reclusive those first weeks in Juan les Pins, Hillary might easily have run into Hadley or Scott Fitzgerald. Hem and Hadley were living in Villa Paquita in Juan les Pins not a mile away from Hillary's cottage, a villa recently vacated by the Fitzgeralds, who were staying at Villa St. Louis, the home of Sara and Gerald Murphy. Hillary never went to the beach at the point of Juan les Pins, or the larger public one in the first cove along the road into Antibbe, and so she never saw Hadley

and Bumby playing in the sand or, further down the coast, Scott and Zelda sitting under an umbrella at a beachside cafe having a mid-day whiskey. Hillary did finally come to the realization she needed contact with people who could offer her more than Maurice the fish man or Yvette the produce lady at the central Antibbe market. It was as if, having proved to herself she could be happy alone, she wanted to explore her surroundings and join the community of people who came to the south every year.

She visited the neighbors on each side of her cottage, both of whom were wealthy British couples in their mid-forties. They seemed glad to have the American gamine living in the cottage. Although the couple living in the house to the west uttered an insincere and vague invitation to her to visit them, the couple in the house to the east of hers set a date one week off for Hillary to come to a party they were throwing for some friends from England who were travelling along the Italian and French coasts. She spent time in Nice at fine shops looking for new clothes, and went down to the beach along the Boulevard de Anglais in the afternoons for lunch and sunbathing at a beachfront bistro she remembered. The owners, a middle aged couple with outrageous, bawdy senses of humor, beckoned her to join them whatever night she pleased on one of their sojourns throughout the local bars and clubs.

One late afternoon, returning from Nice, she asked the taxi driver to drop her at a corner in central Antibe where she had left her bicycle that morning. After paying the man, she turned and saw Scott coming out of a shop. She waited in the shadow of a doorway until she was sure he was alone, then walked up to him and casually spoke his name.

He turned, squinted into the bright light, and smiled. "Good God, girl, I can't

believe it's you."

Hillary was immediately caught on a familiar shoal of feeling as she put her arms around him and allowed him to kiss her, wondrous at the ineluctable continuity of a failed relationship with a sad, sad man. He was more relaxed than she had ever seen him. She also noticed that he didn't look nervously around when they settled at a table in front of a bistro in the main square. They quickly established that they were summer neighbors.

"How is Z, Scott?"

He ignored the question. They sat in silence, sipping the native wine and looking up at each other from time to time as if hoping the other would fill the ravine of silence. Scott spoke first.

"Hadley and the child are in Juan les Pins, you know," he said tentatively.

"I had no idea."

"Really?" he asked. "Yes, Hadley and the boy and one other moved into the house we left when we went to Gerald and Sara's place."

"One other?" What a strange way to put it, she thought.

"Yes. Pauline Pfeiffer is staying there with them."

"Are you joking?" Hillary knew as well as anyone that Ernest was capable of self-indulgent behavior but this was stretching anything she thought possible.

"No, I'm not. It is quite strange, things over at his place. Ernest is away in Spain and returns in a couple of weeks. The two women share the villa with the little boy."

"Have you seen Hadley?" Hillary asked.

"Yes. Once. She told me Pauline is 'their' friend, whom they invited for a couple

of weeks since her sister went back to the States a month ago. They thought it would be good for Hadley to have company while Ernest is away."

This was too much. Hillary knew what was going on as clearly as if she had arranged it herself and she couldn't stand the clarity of a situation so obviously lost on Hadley. She wanted to change the subject. "How long have you been here?"

Scott talked through three whiskeys without prompting. He was in a fine mood, light and unconcerned with the troubling thoughts to which she was accustomed from him, and after a while she made a comment about it. "Yes, I feel much better lately. *Gatsby* is doing well and for a while I only have to think about the next one. It is so pleasant when it's only a thought, when I haven't actually to sit down and put in real work."

"Tell me about it."

He smiled the easy smile of an unburdened man. "No, not yet. I wouldn't hide a thing from you but there really isn't anything to hide. Not yet. Anyway," he smiled, waving it away, "tell me about where you're staying."

She told him about the cottage, the gardens, her tortured efforts to learn how to paint, the serenity she felt when she put away the canvas on which she painted simple wood spoons hanging on her kitchen wall, how she saw so much in her effort that no one else would ever imagine. "It's always that way," Fitzgerald said, his voice melancholy for the first time that day. "Few see the grand design in what we do, and no one, not even those closest to us, can imagine the past, present and future we tuck into every ordinary morsel."

"You flatter me," she said.

"No. There are many artists. Few want adulation, even fewer seek to make big money, and still fewer really need to show people they really have talent."

"What a nice way of putting it . . ."

"Anyway, I'm not flattering you. You're doing what you're doing for yourself, the noblest motivation."

"I doubt the 'noble' part. I wouldn't mind being so good at something that others would pay for a slice."

Fitzgerald looked down at his whiskey and glanced shyly at Hillary. "I hope you won't misconstrue this, but I would love to see your place."

That afternoon and early evening was the last time Hillary Malone and Scott Fitzgerald were intimate. Scott strolled with her through the flower gardens surrounding the house, and when they went inside and he stood in the kitchen in front of her easel, he seemed genuinely interested in her spoons. She didn't doubt his sincerity. He saw in the tawny texture of the wood the faintest reflection of a lilac bush beyond the kitchen window. He said the picture evoked isolation. This proved to Hillary that subjective reality could be perceived by another, that artistic endeavor was not an isolated pleasure, and that the cognitive process was elastic if not infinite. When in late afternoon she took his hand and led him into the bedroom, she had no interest in a serious and painful encounter, wanting instead to send him away with a wicked image of pleasure, an epitaph of carnality. The moment at which Fitzgerald had to do his part was no different than before, but by then he was as unconcerned as Hillary. She did things to him physically no one had ever done before, leaving him with disbelieving awe at the sensations he felt. She played a game with him in which he was required to force

her, against her will, into a position from which he could rape her, and she screamed wickedly while she waited for his arousal, and then pulled him atop her, her vulvus elevated by a pillow, offering him the geometric delta of indescribable pleasure.

Fitzgerald, shaken and quiet but not the least bit saddened, got up to dress after sunset. He didn't utter a word. He knew what Hillary intended, knew it was the last time they would be together. And he knew that the last several hours were a gift -- he left a woman's bed feeling he had given her real pleasure.

Part II

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

I didn't see Hillary Malone for nearly four years after my evening with her at the Sorbonne playhouse. During that period we exchanged letters, most of which contained only routine news and forwarding addresses. Taken together, these letters provided little information about Hillary's life. In July 1926, I was on assignment in Greece and decided to take a long, slower route back to the States by way of Rome, Nice, and Lisbon. Knowing nothing about Nice, I asked a friend where I could take Hillary to dinner and he suggested the Negresco. Always prone to metaphor, he called the hotel the jewel in the Boulevard des Anglais' crown. I wrote to Hillary at her summer address in Juan les Pins and asked her to have dinner with me there, naming a date nearly a month away. As my departure from Greece grew near, I became panicky because I had heard nothing in response to my query, posted three weeks earlier, but on the day before I was to embark at the port of Piraeus, her letter arrived. It said only that she would meet me at the bar at eight and was happy to know I was doing so well that I could buy her dinner at the Negresco. I asked my friend about this, and he confirmed that the hotel was the most expensive in Nice, adding somewhat defensively that he inferred I wanted something very special for the woman I was going to meet. I didn't argue.

I stayed at a small hotel away from the water, on the edge of the Place Massena. Since I hadn't slept well on the ship I decided to rest in my room most of the day. It is impossible to describe the anticipation I felt as the hours crawled up to the moment when I could leave the hotel and take a taxi to the Negresco. When the time approached, I left far too early and when my taxi waited in line for the traffic to clear at

the Boulevard des Anglais before turning right, I decided to get out and walk. The evening air was slightly cool in the shadows of the buildings, but the sun, still an hour or more from the horizon, was warm. The sky had a calming pink-rose hue which suggested sunlight filtered through a tinted parasol. I realized I was walking too fast and slowed down.

The Negresco is a majestic structure, and in 1926 would have been just as impressive if it were located in the heart of Paris. The black and gold dome glistened and the shop windows along the street beckoned to quiet, old money. Entering the lobby and walking toward the central rotunda, I paused to peer into a couple of the smart shops displaying clothing, jewelry, and the useless personal accessories that appeal to the wealthy. At the center of the hotel was an enormous round room with display cases along its circumference and groupings of furniture below the frescoed and painted dome which rose four stories to stained windows at a peak brilliantly illuminated by sunlight. The structure was more like a museum than a hotel. The lounge did not adjoin the main dining room but was down the hall from it. After checking my dinner reservation I entered the bar, chose two chairs close to each other on either side of a small table on the far side of the room near a window, sat and ordered scotch, and prepared to wait. No sooner did I give the waiter my order when Hillary appeared at the arched entrance. The exact details of her face had faded from my memory somewhat; the recollected beauty was not nearly as vibrant as that of the woman who looked at me, arched one of her brows and smiled, and started toward me.

She accepted my kiss on her cheek and returned it, her perfume filling my nostrils with a delicate, fresh scent. Her hair was pulled back and swept up on top of

her head, secured by a hand painted wood pin. Her long dress was a deep green and she wore a short jacket, like a matador's, of white on white brocade with large green buttons. Her breasts were quite visible as she sat in the chair I held for her and my eyes paused there for as long as I could manage. For the first thirty minutes or so Hillary seemed ill at ease and I could not discern the reason from anything I had said. She asked about my newspaper, the *Philadelphia Enquirer*, my work, and the traveling I had done. She seemed particularly interested in Greece. I told her about Rhodes, my favorite island, and its people, the profound sense of civilization, the ruins, and the kinds of stories I wired back to my paper. When we got up to go into the dining room, I realized I had done all of the talking.

Hillary looked perfectly at home in the ornate and spacious dining room. The ease with which she accepted those surroundings contrasted starkly with my own awkwardness. My life the previous four months was rough at best, often sleeping on a blanket on a rocky ledge among Communist rebels in the mountains near Macedonia. Even in Athens I stayed in a cheap hotel with Dirk Green, my friend from UPI, and ate peasant food at local tavernas. Hillary noticed my discomfiture and asked what was the matter.

I laughed. "I'm a little uneasy," I said, my eyes sweeping the expansive room. "I was told this is the best restaurant in Nice but I didn't expect this."

"Well, it was your choice," she said bluntly. "I would have picked something a bit more casual." Realizing how her words had stung me she added, "This is wonderful. I love the room." The waiter brought the wine I ordered and canapés. I raised my glass and wished us a pleasant evening together. "I want to hear more about the communists

in Greece. Are they really dedicated or is communism just an excuse to fight the government?"

"I'll tell you what, Hillary. Let me ask some questions and then we'll come back to Greece."

"You want to know whether I have loved the famous or soon-to-be famous, as I predicted in Paris four years ago?" She enjoyed my surprise at her memory. "Here's the answer: I have used sex but I haven't found love. Lately I've been grappling with the reasons for this."

"I'm sure it's worth grappling with," I said, unsure what to say next. "Do you shun deserving men?"

She smiled. "I shunned you."

"Yes, you did . . ." At that moment I betrayed myself. I knew it would happen sooner or later during the evening but I had assumed it would happen later. "The hardest thing I ever did was wait four years to see you again."

Hillary stared at me, neither smiling nor frowning, her expression as vacant as if I had said something to her in a language she didn't know.

"A man as good looking as you? World traveling journalist, educated if not erudite, interesting, and still thinking about a somewhat older woman you met in college?" She shook her head. "Something's wrong."

"The obvious explanation is obsession." I wanted her to know I had given this some thought.

"It is rather obvious, isn't it? Unless, of course, this is just an approach, a way to seduce me." I could feel my face flush, not because what she said was true but

because it was all too true. Was she taunting me or asking a serious question? After a long silence I began to tell her about Greece and this diversion to a safer subject allowed her to really relax. She asked a lot of questions, damned perceptive ones, and we found agreement in the belief that communism would sputter and die because its premise was utterly bankrupt. Hillary thought communism was just an excuse, or rallying point, for the poor to try to topple the rich who clung to power.

The arrival of our first course, a thick white fish resting on a green sauce, gave me the opportunity to reenter her life in a way that would not cause her to become either defensive or silent. Hillary helped me by turning the conversation to her summer-long stay in the south. She described her cottage in Juan les Pins and the happiness she felt to be painting. I heard more behind the words though, almost a mourning quality in her voice. Were she aware of my intuition she would have been as grateful for my silence as I had been a moment earlier when she changed the subject away from my desire. I focused on painting instead of the hole some man, or men, seemed to have left inside her. After a while, the inevitability of inflicting a wound on myself moved to the foreground again and I gave it a voice.

"It must seem fantastic to hear a twenty-two year old man tell you that he fell in love with you four years ago and hasn't found anyone since."

"I have condemned you to four years of celibacy?" she asked playfully.

"I didn't say that."

Hillary laughed, her first real laugh since walking into the lounge an hour before. "Thank goodness." She looked at me seriously. "You realize you are smitten. I must tell you also," she said, puckering her lips, "that you are no longer too young for me --

each year makes those differences less significant. You are very attractive, and you have substance, but I don't want you. If I did, you wouldn't even have to mention love, the wanting would be enough."

"Things happen when people let them happen," I said pathetically.

"I disagree. I don't know what it is that gives one a hunger for another, I really don't, but it can't be analyzed and people can't sit around and wait for it to happen." She stopped, seemed to decide something, and continued. "I have had a lover recently who is not a good lover, he is married, and he has a pathetic lack of self-esteem and doubts about his manhood. Yet whenever we're together I am obsessed with pleasing him. Not just giving him what he wants, you understand, but giving him more than he even knows he wants."

I stayed calm. "Lucky man. Who is it?"

"He is well known. I shouldn't say."

More food was served and we ate in silence. As immersed as I was in my miserable curiosity and jealousy for the unnamed lover of Hillary Malone, I could still appreciate the exquisite food. But that pleasure was no recompense for a heartache I felt so profoundly that my chest literally throbbed and my eyes seemed ready to burst with held-back tears. Hillary saw this and reached out for my hand. "The man is Scott Fitzgerald, the writer."

"The *Great Gatsby* Scott Fitzgerald?" I asked incredulously.

"Yes, the same." She said casually, without pride.

My hurt turned to anger. "Hillary, what are you doing? With all the men who are noble and decent and who would be happy to love you, why are you having an affair

with an alcoholic writer who doesn't love you?" I knew immediately that I had gone too far. Her nostrils flared and her eyes widened.

"What do you know?" she said heatedly, putting knife and fork on her plate in a manner which implied the evening was over. "Just what the hell do you know? I am not 'having' an affair with him. I had it. Scott is very decent and very noble, too much so if anything. He drinks too much but I doubt he's an alcoholic, at least by local standards. And what do I care if he loves me?"

"I'm sorry, Hillary," I whispered. "Please, let's continue. I shouldn't have invaded your privacy."

"No, you shouldn't," she said.

"I'm jealous."

"What right do you have to be jealous? I belong to no one, certainly not to a man who as a boy developed an irrational fixation."

I did not offer a rejoinder. More time passed. Hillary picked up her fork after a minute or two, her posture relaxed, and we talked and drank the wine. She even laughed once or twice. Yet a wall had been erected around her that held her in and kept me out and there was nothing I could do to surmount it. An hour later we parted in the lobby just as we had greeted each other in the lounge. I kissed her cheek and she kissed mine. When she walked through the double glass doors to the street, I went back into the lounge, which was now crowded and noisy, a hundred people talking, shouting, and dancing. I sat at the bar planning to drown my self-pity in strong spirits and isolation. I knew that continued obedience to the attraction from which I seemed unable to free myself was hopeless, but I also knew I was not capable of doing anything

about it. There was something about Hillary Malone that would not lie still in me, would not permit me to bury obsession and move past it, something that spoke to my unconscious self in a way that dictated perseverance. I left the lounge when a man I knew as a student at the Sorbonne approached me and asked me to join his "happy" table, conspiratorially assuring me that there was a woman from Lyon in his group on holiday whom I really should meet. She had seen me across the room, he whispered to me below the din, and said something to my old acquaintance from which he inferred she wanted to meet me. It was always difficult to abide the brief, gasping relationships to which I fell prey, and on this night my sense of loss was too great even to pretend. I thanked him for the invitation, drained my glass, and returned to my hotel, eager to leave for Lisbon.

The next morning, walking out of my hotel room, I noticed a white envelope on the floor just inside the door. Stooping down I saw my name scrawled in Hillary's distinctive handwriting. I didn't hope.

Dear _____:

I know I hurt you, hurt you don't deserve. That's twice. I'm not just out for adventure, you see. I have a plan now, the bare outline of one. I won't stop and think about men and women, meaning, children, the future, my mortality, all those things. I know deep down how important those things are for you and that is why I cannot give more than I have to give, which is nothing.

Stay in touch and please, yes please be my friend

Hillary Malone

Hillary returned to Paris a month later. She was anxious to show her paintings to Gertrude Stein and was even more anxious to see Hemingway. Her neighbors in Juan

les Pins had her to dinner the night before she left and after midnight she walked down the drive to the road and up the path to her cottage, illuminated by a full moon on a cloudless September night. She was sad to leave the place where she had burrowed so deeply into herself.

She called Maria as soon as she got back to Paris. Their relationship had languished after she recovered from her illness the previous fall and during the summer she resolved to put it back on course. Maria came to her apartment and helped her unpack a crate with the three paintings she completed in Juan le Pins. They put away clothes and talked with each other just as they always had. When her apartment was back in order Hillary poured two glasses of wine, sat her friend down on the sofa, and propped the paintings against two chairs.

"What do you think?" she asked.

Maria smiled at her and reached over to squeeze her arm. One picture was three wooden spoons hanging from a stucco wall, tied together at the top with strands of straw. The second was a window which reflected the inside of a room but through which a lush garden was visible. The third was Hillary, her face bordered by the frame of an oval mirror.

"They're wonderful, Hillary. Really wonderful," Maria said. "But there is something . . . I don't know how to describe it . . . a dissonance, as though the reality of your setting has been slightly distorted." Maria didn't know whether the dissonance was intended or represented a flaw in Hillary's technique. Maria decided to gamble. "They are unusual."

"How do you mean?"

"Well . . . the way you bend the light ever so slightly and just barely change the shapes of things. It is a very interesting technique."

"Do you really think so? I was unsure about it." Maria assured her she thought the technique was interesting and said she wanted Gene to see them. "I'm interested in what Gertrude will think of them," Hillary said.

It is not known whether Stein saw Hillary's first three paintings when Hillary returned to Paris; there exist in Hillary's letters only oblique references to her expectation that Stein would see them. Three months later, Hillary wrote to Stein and it is manifest that by that time Stein had not seen them.

December 2, 1926

Dear Gertrude:

I hope you are feeling better and I hope you know I have stayed away only because Alice told me you are not receiving visitors. What a loss it must be for all your friends when, on Saturday afternoons, they have no place to go!

During this summer I started to paint. Not like before when I was simply getting over the fear of putting paint on the canvas, unable to take back that first stroke of the brush, but really to complete pictures in my own style, taking time to labor over them and unable to find excuses for failure. I never had to be courageous before, not even with a poem where the words frightened me even as I put them down.

I saw Ernest last month, a very brief conversation at Select early one evening as he was about to leave and I was arriving with a friend for something to eat. He told me the news about Hadley and I almost cried. I think the only reason I didn't is that he seemed in such a trauma about it. I don't care how confused he is about another woman, and I know there is one! He is going to miss Hadley and I think he understands that. He was very solemn and stoic. As you well know, Fitzgerald is a sore subject between Ernest and me, but Ernest told me Scott is going back to New York this month, and he couldn't say for how long. I find it hard to believe, for reasons I'd rather not write, that Scott hasn't gotten in touch with me to let me know he's leaving France. That hurts.

I am sure Alice is taking very good care of you and I am confident you will be feeling well enough soon to allow visits from your friends, a category in which, with deep respect and affection, I place myself.

Fondly,

Hillary

Allen MacDermitt inherited so much money from generations of Scottish ancestors that he had no idea at any given time just exactly what he owned or how much it was worth. Chartered accountants and bookkeepers gave reports to solicitors and investment counselors, who in turn reported to two close associates originally hired by MacDermitt's father who, if not actually with MacDermitt wherever he travelled, communicated with him at least once each day. He used to take an interest in those reports, asking questions and demanding follow-up when he didn't receive a satisfactory answer, but since moving to France in 1925 his interest in his own finances declined and he merely listened to his subordinates and signed the documents they presented to him. His new hobbies were art and the high society of Paris which he was determined to penetrate. It is probable that the latter was his true ambition, the former being merely a vehicle to help propel him into the inner sanctum he correctly surmised to be unreachable by the merely wealthy. The French passion for art became his passion, which he expressed not merely through the acquisition of paintings and sculptures but by establishing himself as one of the most influential patrons of artists in the first half of the twentieth century. Grants from MacDermitt's foundation were made very selectively but they were generous. Recipients of his largesse could work for years without

worrying about the mundane pressure of feeding themselves. Through his growing network of contacts he acquired vast knowledge about writers and painters of the day who were unknown but possibly worthy of support.

MacDermitt was forty-six years old in 1926. He was tall and lean, with perfectly erect posture and an athletic physique. His thinning, brown hair had only recently begun to develop a gray fringe around the temples and in his closely cropped moustache. The skin on his face was pulled taut over high cheekbones and although always well tanned his face had no wrinkles. He had had several well publicized affairs with famous women, yet he never married and was on every short list of the most desirable, eligible men in the world. MacDermitt was well known to Gerald and Sara Murphy, who felt intimidated by him, by Gertrude Stein, who thought him boorish, and to many other people Hillary knew, and it is notable not that she met him in December, 1926 but that it took so long for them to meet at all.

They met at a Joan Miro exhibition at a gallery on the rue Royale around the corner from the Hotel Crillon, where Hillary had bought drinks for Hemingway on at least two occasions. It was Hemingway's favorite bar when he "had money to spend" or a friend willing to spend money on him. The gallery was a four story narrow building -- one took in the exhibition vertically, up and down steep, long, open stairways. Hillary met MacDermitt on the second floor landing on her way down from the top floor. He stood alone beside a small bar in an alcove under a stained glass window and, as she started to walk past him toward the stairs leading to the ground floor, he smiled and bowed to her. Many men paid attention to Hillary and so it is impossible to guess why she stopped to talk to MacDermitt, but whatever the reason Hillary accepted his offer of

champagne.

“May I?” he asked, taking a stem from the bar and handing it to her.

Hillary was immediately and strongly attracted to him. “Thank you,” she said. She hoped her tone was not too warm. Nor too cold.

MacDermitt didn’t seem to want to talk. “You are quite welcome,” was all he said.

“Enjoy the exhibition,” she said indifferently, put her untouched glass of champagne on the bar, and went downstairs to find Maria and Gene.

MacDermitt asked people about her.

Two days later, he sent her a brief note: “Would you join me on Tuesday at a small dinner party at my home?” She declined the invitation. He called her on the telephone the next morning.

“Miss Malone. I am really quite sorry you could not make dinner at my home the other night, but would you join me for dinner at Maxim’s on Friday?”

“I’m not sure about Friday. I’d best not say yes, and then have to say no. Could you call me on Monday?”

Hillary's correspondence offers no clues as to why, after meeting him, she played cat-and-mouse with MacDermitt. His money certainly did not intimidate her and he was not the least bit presumptuous about the direction a relationship between them might take. In fact, Hillary told Maria a few months later, she found MacDermitt's apparent lack of sexual interest in her frustrating.

It didn't last. By the end of January Hillary was spending most of her time with MacDermitt. She was even perceived as the *de facto* hostess in his home when he entertained there. She accompanied him to nearly all of the events in his rigorous

social schedule. People began talking about the possibility that Allen MacDermid had met the woman he would marry.

MacDermid had met Hemingway and Fitzgerald a couple of times and formed definite, and negative, opinions about them. At first, he kept his views to himself, but when Hillary told him of her high regard for the two men, MacDermid gave her his opinion. One night in early February they were having dinner alone at a restaurant and MacDermid asked her to tell him the exact nature of her relationships with the two writers. She told him they were close friends. "Just close friends?" he asked, trying not to sound peevish.

"Why, Allen, I don't think it matters much, does it? I'll grant you I've only had to read the newspapers the last few years to learn the details of your relationships, but mine are my own affair."

"Please Hillary," he said. His voice was low but she could feel its intensity.

"No, Allen. I told you they are my friends, and that should be good enough. Intimate relationships either of us had before we met are out of bounds." She softened. "If we continue seeing each other you will be glad I was circumspect. I've seen too many relationships suffer from the need people have at the beginning to open up the entire past."

"Well, I am sure Hemingway has been more than a friend."

"You are, are you?"

"Yes. Excuse my saying so, but the man is a wagging cock."

"He likes women so he must have had me, is that it?"

"I don't know." He looked past her, watching a waiter light a flame at another

table.

"What about Scott Fitzgerald? Aren't you curious about that friendship?" she asked.

"Yes, but not as much. I know Fitzgerald is married but I think he's a fairy."

"A fairy?" Hillary asked. In all those years in Paris she had never heard the term used.

"You know. A queer, a homosexual."

"Really? I had no idea."

"His troubles with his wife are widely known and I suspect his homosexuality is the cause of it all."

Hillary never told him the truth. In fact, she never mentioned her writer friends again, unless someone else brought them into the conversation. She was quite content for MacDermitt to think that the "wagging cock" had been intimate with her and that Fitzgerald, who had been in her bed just months before, was a "fairy." He dropped the subject. Hillary presumed that MacDermitt lost interest in her past lovers at the moment he became her lover. That occurred a week after their restaurant conversation about Hemingway and Fitzgerald. For Hillary, the sexual act found its ultimate expression in MacDermitt's bedroom and she was convinced she didn't have to look any further. For the first time in her life she attached herself to a man physically. He did not beg for another rendezvous; he assumed she would come to him the next day. He did not whimper betrayals of love and need; he simply kissed her, told her she was wonderful, and fell off into a deep sleep.

Two weeks after she began sleeping with MacDermitt, Hillary had lunch with

Maria and was nearly bursting with eagerness to talk about it all. Yet she did not describe her feelings as love.

"It is astounding," she told Maria. They were seated inside Lipp's. A cold, winter rain fell outside the windows. "I didn't like him much at first, he seemed so wooden and artificial. Although he isn't at all unconventional, he is very interesting. And," she continued with a broad smile, "he is the most incredible lover." Maria looked down at her glass of wine. "I've embarrassed you," Hillary said.

Maria looked up at her and smiled. "No Hill, it's not that. I envy you is all."

Hillary then remembered what Maria once told her about her relationship with Gene and this made her feel sad. She leaned across the table and whispered. "Maria, I can't tell you what it's been like. He gets me so incredibly excited, and then he makes love to me for thirty or forty minutes, first gentle, then rough . . ."

Maria interrupted her. "What do you mean 'rough'?" she asked with a frown.

"Oh, I don't mean cruel or hurtful. More like the caveman, grab the woman by the hair and throw her onto the bed of straw, that sort of thing. It is very exciting. Just when I worry about how far he'll go, being brutish and all, suddenly he's gentle and tender. And his physical stamina? The first few days I told him he had to back away a little, that physically I had to adapt."

"And his reaction?"

"He laughed. He told me to take all the time I needed."

"He is a good deal older than you," Maria said gently. "I mean, don't be too swept up with new love, not just yet."

"Maria, I didn't say I love Allen."

"Well, I just assumed. . ."

"Love may come, yes. I'm beginning to hope so. But at this moment I am simply enjoying a man like I never have, his power, his strength, his sexuality. And, frankly, the way he adores me without falling all over himself to show it."

"What's next?" Maria asked.

"Good question. And a problem. He invited me to stay at his house in Nice." Maria asked her when. "He wants me to go down in early May and stay at least a month. He plans to be there for three months and hopes I might even stay the entire season. Can you and Gene come down for part of the time if I say 'yes'?" she asked.

"I'm sure we could, but why? Does something worry you?"

"I want to spend time with my own friends. Not just his. I asked him if I could have some friends along for a week or more, and he told me that any of my friends were welcome." Hillary dipped her head. "Except Hemingway. But I told him he could forget that. Hem would never visit me."

"Why does he object to Ernest?" Maria asked, and Hillary told her about their conversation on that subject. "Is there something you haven't told me?" Maria asked, smiling.

"I never slept with Ernest, Maria, although he suggested something along those lines once when he was drunk. So what do you think? Should I go to Nice for the season?"

Maria looked at Hillary and pondered. It was not easy for her. Although she was genuinely happy about Hillary's enthusiasm and apparent trust, she herself did not care for MacDermitt, who she saw as a collector, a man with trophies. After a minute she

looked Hillary straight in the eye. "I think you should follow your instincts. They're good ones. If you decide to go, Gene and I would be happy to spend a week or two with you."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Hillary got cold feet. It wasn't simply that she and MacDermitt fought one night about the way a man repeatedly stared at her in a restaurant. The fight, which continued well past their return to MacDermitt's house, finally caused her to pack a few necessities and return to her apartment for a couple of days. Nor was it because MacDermitt displayed a nasty quality she hadn't seen before. In a brief letter to Maria, who was in the States for several weeks with Gene, Hillary wrote that "no matter how much time I spend in my place alone, or in Allen's with him, we're still merely seeing each other. But to live with him in Nice for several months seems a prelude to something more lasting, and I'm not at all sure I want to create that kind of momentum."

She continued:

My hesitancy should not be misconstrued as a change of heart about Allen or any fear of 'living with' him. It has more to do with freedom. That isn't quite right either (excuse my rambling). Call it emancipation. I haven't painted in weeks. What disturbs me is not that I can't find the time but that I seem to have misplaced the inclination. Allen tells me that is natural and I shouldn't worry about it, that my need will re-emerge. 'We can't any of us be passionate about too many things at once,' he said. But I can't be so sanguine about it. I feel like such a dilettante. Worse, like a married man's lover. Allen is married to this universe he's created around himself and as important as he tells me I am, I am still on the periphery.

In February 1927 Hillary was not concerned about Allen MacDermitt himself. Her difficulty was her own lack of focus after such a satisfactory beginning with painting. Her drifting contrasted sharply with MacDermitt's intense focus on all he did.

There are reasons for Hillary's final assent to MacDermitt's Nice proposal besides her desire to continue the relationship and her worry that it would be jeopardized by a

months-long absence. In February, everyone she loved most was away. Hemingway was in Gstaad writing a book of stories. Fitzgerald was in the United States; that month she received a letter from him postmarked Edgemoor, Delaware. Gertrude Stein, who Hillary continued to see but with less regularity, told her Dos Passos was in New York working for the New Playwrights after spending the winter in Mexico. All the expatriates were gone, and the spring and early summer loomed before her like an open canyon.

Hemingway returned to Paris in March for a short while and, to Hillary's surprise, made an effort to look her up. One Tuesday afternoon, as she returned to her apartment, he was sitting on the stoop of her building, the back of his head resting against one of the concrete lions, reading a book. As she started up the steps he glanced up at her, smiled, and closed the book. "Hello," he said casually and stood up.

"I can't believe you actually came to see me," Hillary said. They embraced briefly. "Come in for some wine?"

When Hillary returned to the parlor from the kitchen with a bottle of claret and two glasses, Hem was over by the front windows looking out at the street. The buds on the trees were just starting to open and the view was suffused with a pale green. In another month the leaves would completely obscure the street below. Hillary sat and asked him how he was.

"Hash and Bumby are going back to the States the middle of next month," he said solemnly, and walked over to a chair, sat down, and reached for the glass she had poured.

"Sad for you. What are you doing, Ernest?"

"Did you know Pat and Duff are apart?"

"No. I haven't seen them since the last time I saw you."

"Yeah, she finally got rid of him, the incestuous bastard."

"I thought you liked him?"

"Sure, I like him enough." Hemingway leaned back and closed his eyes as if trying to calm himself. "Loeb threatened to kill me."

"What?" Hillary asked incredulously.

"Uh huh. It was comic . . . and sad too I guess." Hemingway laughed, but when he saw only Hillary's puzzled look he stopped. "Somebody, I forget who, told me that Loeb was going around telling people he was going to kill me. So I sent word around that I would be in front of Lipp's every Saturday and Sunday afternoon from two to four to wait for anyone who wished to shoot me." He laughed again, this time longer. Hillary too was infected with the absurdity of the story.

"Why in God's name did he threaten to kill you?" She poured more wine.

"Just a demented character out of my book, I think."

"Yes, the book." Hillary puckered her lips. "I recognized Pat and Duff and Harold and maybe one or two others but I couldn't find Hillary in it."

"Getting mauled on a hillside for instance?"

"Well, perhaps something along the lines of the beautiful and mysterious interloper in all the revelry . . ."

"Sure, but I only write flattering things about myself."

Hillary changed the subject and asked about Scott. The passage of time and Hemingway's friendship with him made it a safe subject now. "I miss him," Hemingway said sincerely. "He may be the best damned friend I have and now he's gone too . . ."

Hemingway's eyes lost their focus. Then he stared at the painting over the sofa. It was one of hers. "You know, Hillary, I've loved Pauline a long time now. She's back in Paris and it's real fine seeing her again."

"You're going to marry her." It was a statement, not a question.

"I never said so."

"No, I did."

Hemingway and Pauline were married in May at St-Honore-d'Eylau in the Place Victor-Hugo. Jinny Pfeiffer, of whom Hemingway had grown very fond, was the only one present for the ceremony. On the day of the wedding Hillary was in Nice and the Jolas' had just arrived for a seven or eight day visit. Maria told her about the marriage, and Hillary responded only by nodding to herself. She was thinking more about the conversation with Hemingway in her apartment in March, after she told him, before he got up to leave, that he'd marry Pauline.

He asked her how she was and she told him about MacDermitt.

"I've met him a couple of times. Loads of money."

"There is more to Allen than his money," Hillary said. Ernest was frowning and she decided she didn't really want to hear what was on his mind.

"I don't like him, Hillary. Sorry." She wanted to ask why but didn't. Hemingway's opinions about people were quickly formed and immutable. She knew that much. "He's too old for you and you don't need the money. The man buys respectability and it isn't for sale. But the thing I like least is the way he uses people and then throws them away like yesterday's paper. Sorry, but you asked."

"I didn't ask."

"Really? I thought you did."

"Why does it bother you so much, what Ernest thinks?" Maria asked. They were sitting on the terrace of MacDermitt's spectacular house below the Moyon Corniche. The view was breathtaking, westward across the port of Nice, along the stretch of beach to the left of the Boulevard d'Anglais, and beyond to Cap d'Antibes on the horizon. As they talked, Maria and Hillary looked out at the view instead of at each other. After breakfast that morning MacDermitt had asked Gene to join him down at the harbor to check on some repairs to his yacht. The men had been gone about an hour.

"I'm not sure. But it's just as well. I can be Ernest's friend and Allen's, but they will never occupy the same room together."

"Ernest's approval is important to you," Maria said.

"Yes it is." Hillary looked up, embarrassed. "Is my candor about the way . . . you know . . . the way Allen and I are together, is it at all difficult for you?"

"No, darling. I love to hear about passion. Even the passion of other people."

"I keep waiting for the bubble to burst," Hillary said, and sighed.

"It might not. People do find happiness."

"I know, but all the same . . . there is another side of Allen."

"What do you mean?"

"It's hard to explain. He's kind and generous and Hem is wrong that he just wants to buy people. I know he's not obsessed with acceptance, as some say. He gives a lot of money away because he believes it's important to help talented people."

"Yes, but what do you mean about another 'side' of him, Hillary?"

"Nothing much. Just that I can feel him holding something back whenever we're

alone together."

"What is he holding back?"

Hillary stood and slapped her sides with her hands in frustration. "I don't know what I'm saying! I've been around money and I've never known anyone for whom it is less important. Wealth is natural to him, never forced, and he is gracious to people without regard to their position in society, either here or in Paris. He was as touched as I was by the sadness of extinguished or failing lines of European aristocracy we encountered wherever we went in Monte Carlo. He was actually kind to people who looked down their noses at him. That isn't a shallow man."

"I agree with you, Hillary. But you defend the man's character with me when I haven't even challenged it." Maria smiled. "I have an open mind."

The men returned at one and Hillary went into the house to see if lunch was ready. Gene accepted a drink from MacDermitt and they sat down with Maria, who listened to Gene's enthusiastic description of MacDermitt's yacht, which MacDermitt said they could board in two days for an overnight sail. At lunch, MacDermitt broke his perfect composure when a waiter tipped a plate of shrimp onto the table, and the way he told the man to get off the terrace, his teeth showing with barely suppressed rage, left Hillary and the Jolas' stunned. MacDermitt apologized immediately and explained calmly that the man's clumsiness continually tested his patience, that he kept him on only because he was the unemployed cousin of the cook, of whom he was quite fond. Everyone relaxed. They talked about England and discovered that each of them except Hillary, who had no basis for an opinion, found the British intolerably boorish. They laughed when Gene speculated that their rigidity was a function of the awful food they

ate. "I'll have that to look forward to at the end of the summer," MacDermid said casually.

"How so?" Gene asked him.

"In August I go back to London for the winter."

"I thought Paris was your home now," Maria said.

"I own a home there, of course," MacDermid said, "but my mother is quite ill and there are financial matters I must attend to. I have been away a long time."

Maria noticed Hillary's look of surprise at this disclosure. Hillary alternated glances between MacDermid and her wine glass with her lips parted slightly as if wanting to speak but not knowing what to say. "I'll return to Paris after the first of the year," he said and looked at Hillary for her reaction. She did not look up at him.

On Thursday they packed bags and drove down to the port. MacDermid assured them that no one would have to lend a hand on his yacht. There was a crew of five, he said, which made everything quite easy and comfortable. When the launch left the dock and headed out into the harbor, Maria imagined a two or three masted boat with a cozy cabin and sleeping quarters that would be cramped, a few men loitering on deck waiting to get underway, and a small aft deck with a few folding chairs under a blue and white awning. When the launch left the harbor and moved into the open sea, Maria looked back at the yachts anchored in the blue green water below the steep face of the mountain ridge on the eastern side of Nice and wondered where they were going. She presumed that the glistening white ship just ahead of them was a small cruise ship, and stared wide-eyed as the launch slowed and pulled alongside it.

The smartly dressed crewmen helped the women up the ladder and then the

men. Maria had noticed two rows of portals above the water line and a large superstructure above the main deck. When MacDermid instructed two members of the crew to take the luggage below and asked Hillary and the Jolas' to join him on a tour, Maria remembered what Hillary had said about the casual and unpretentious way MacDermid lived with his wealth. A central staircase of highly buffed mahogany and brass led to a large room on the level immediately below the main deck. MacDermid explained that this was the "lounge." It had three distinct seating groups, a bar, an alcove with radio equipment, and a billiard table under a low light with a rectangular, multicolored shade. Beyond the lounge were a library, the kitchen and pantry, a storage room with a dozen or more snorkeling masks, diving tanks, and other gear, and at the rear a large master bedroom and bath. MacDermid doubled back to a stairway just ahead of the master bedroom and took them below. Toward the rear of the ship was a heavy metal door. Behind it, MacDermid explained, the crew slept in six small rooms with double bunks. In front was a dimly lit hallway with a small bedroom to the left and another to the right and straight ahead, double mahogany doors. He opened the one on the right and led them into the guest suite. The Jolas' two bags sat on a table at the foot of a large four poster bed. There was a small sitting room and a large bathroom to the left. To the right was a large alcove with a sofa, loveseat, and two wing-backed chairs. The circular glass portals let in the morning sun and illuminated the pastel colored walls and rugs. MacDermid turned to face them. "I hope you'll be comfortable here," he said. "I want to assure you that although the crew's quarters are on this deck, you won't see or hear them."

The ship's motors began to grind and quickly accelerated to a steady hum. After

unpacking, the two couples met in the lounge, where a liveried negro greeted them, bowed slightly, and asked if they would like champagne before lunch. Hillary asked for champagne, Gene and Maria had mimosas, and MacDermitt took only seltzer water. Through the windows, which were not round portals but large rectangular panes of glass, they could see the coast far off to the left and the calm Mediterranean in front and to the right. MacDermitt told them they would anchor in Monte Carlo for dinner, spend the night there, and then be on their way to San Remo before dawn the next morning. They would have lunch in San Remo at a restaurant MacDermitt said was extraordinary, and then spend the rest of the day shopping before going back to the ship for dinner. The morning after that, they would leave for Nice, possibly stopping along the way for some swimming and snorkeling.

The Jolas' were overcome by it all, and so was Hillary. MacDermitt did not boast about anything and his demeanor was the same as theirs would be if Maria and Gene told a visitor from America about the walk they planned through a Paris park, followed by dinner at a favorite bistro. As casual as he appeared, however, Hillary could tell MacDermitt was trying hard to win the Jolas' friendship. There were no more incidents with harsh words or any other break in his perfect behavior. Apart from their meals together, he left everyone to themselves, and by creating opportunities for enjoyment without directing them toward any one activity, he made the trip relaxing and fun. The Jolas' had no desire to go snorkeling because Maria had a fear of deep water, and when she expressed reluctance to join MacDermitt and Hillary, Gene said he too would rather sit it out. MacDermitt said he and Hillary would not be in the water very long anyway since the temperature was still cold. At the casino in Monte Carlo, which they

visited after dinner, MacDermitt bet small amounts at the tables so as not to upstage Gene's own modest ones. And at the restaurant in San Remo, run by a fun-loving couple and their teenage son, whom MacDermitt apparently knew since the boy was a baby, he allowed his guests to establish their own relationships with the couple, content to sit back and watch them enjoy themselves.

By the time the cruise ended two days later, Gene felt he had established a genuine friendship with MacDermitt, and Maria was won over, enough so that she didn't think Hillary should have any doubts about him. Maria told her on the last afternoon of their visit that she hoped MacDermitt would ask her to marry him. They were sitting on the larger of the ship's two decks, in comfortable chairs, around a circular glass table. The waiter had brought them highballs. The men were playing billiards below. "Of course I'm glad you like him, Maria," Hillary said.

"Like him? I really do." Maria had completely forgotten Hillary's faint warning about "another side" of the man and Hillary did not want to diminish her enthusiasm.

When the Jolas' left three days later, they embraced Hillary and MacDermitt at the airport in Nice before boarding their plane and Gene asked Hillary about her plans. She told him she would be in Paris by the end of summer and that MacDermitt would be back in Paris in January or February. She said nothing about MacDermitt's asking her to return to Nice with him the following Spring. That invitation was as unanswered as her nagging ambivalence about a seemingly perfect man who seemed to want her to become a permanent part of his life.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The summer of 1927 was an eventful one for Hemingway. He and Pauline took their honeymoon in the primitive fishing village of Le Grau-du Roi below Aigues-Mortes on the Rhone delta, where the writer cut his foot on a rock while swimming and was infected with anthrax. When he returned to Paris he was bedridden for over a week. Sales of *The Sun Also Rises* were soaring and he was about to come out with his curious collection of short stories, *Men Without Women*. Hillary heard about all this from Gertrude Stein after returning to Paris in late August.

She went to rue de Fleures on a Thursday afternoon.

"He has an infection, it seems, that afflicts bovines," Stein said, and snickered.

"You mean cows?" Hillary asked.

"Of course. But it seems Ernest only swam in foul water."

Sensing Stein's attitude, Hillary did not pursue the subject.

Once comfortable in Paris, she began to paint again, but it was not the same. In Juan les Pins she was free and now she was not, despite MacDermitt's absence. She was off the treadmill she experienced in Paris before the spring trip to Nice, yet throughout September and early October Hillary grew depressed and restless. She supposed that Hemingway's effort to look her up earlier that year was somehow related to the fact that Pauline was pregnant, for he always seemed accessible during a crisis or when he was lonely.

The next time she and Hemingway met was at Lipp's, in mid-October. The previous week had been unusually hot but that day was breezy and chilly and the leaves began to descend in increasing numbers and swirl through the air. Hemingway

met her at four wearing pressed slacks and a sweater that looked new. Hillary knew he was not poor anymore and presumed the novel eliminated penury. She knew nothing of the support Hem and Pauline received from her family in the States. Hemingway was relaxed in her presence for the first time she could remember. She too was less apprehensive. After inquiring about her life the past six months, and virtually ignoring Hillary's repeated references to MacDermitt, he told her about Pauline's condition.

"She's going to have a child."

"Hadley told me once you were scared to death she might have missed a period."

"She did, did she?" he asked calmly. "Bumby is just great. We've had good visits together."

"So you don't fear having more children."

"No, not really." Hillary could tell he didn't mean it. "But you know I sometimes think Hash and I would have gone on if there was no child in our lives." He stared at her morosely, as if the declaration was an act of infidelity. Then he changed the subject. "You spent time with Gene and Maria?"

"Yes. They came down in late Spring and stayed with us at Allen's house for a week."

"We went to Spain. Sara Murphy invited us down to Villa America but we went to San Sebastian. We travelled around a little. Santiago de la Compostela is the loveliest town in Spain. It is. We stayed two weeks there."

"You're still quite brown," Hillary said.

"Yeah, Pauline too. We found secluded beaches and lay naked in the sun."

"Allen doesn't like it when I take my top down, even on his boat far out in the water. He says the crew spies on me."

"No doubt," Hemingway said. "I haven't changed my opinion, Hillary. I don't trust MacDermitt. Not a bit. I can't point to anything specific but I've heard rumors." Then he put his finger to the side of his nose and rubbed it back and forth. "And there's this," he said.

"Instinct."

"Sure. I can be a real son-of-a-bitch, you see, and so I know one when I see one."

"Ernest, let's talk about something else."

"Okay," he said with a sigh. He really didn't want to get bogged down in her infatuation with a man he suspected was dangerous and for whom he had more animus than he let on. "I'm working hard on a new book. And I've got a book of stories coming out any day now."

"What's the new book"

"I'm calling it *Farewell to Arms*." Hillary didn't ask him about it, as she would have asked Scott. She knew he wouldn't tell her a thing. But he surprised her. "If my life were ever examined they'd say it's about a woman I loved long ago, but that's only the shell. In fact, it's about more recent love."

"Hadley?" Hillary asked. Hemingway just looked at her. "Where is Scott? What's he up to?" she asked.

"I miss him. He's not written since the spring, when he reported having lunch with Mencken. Dammit, I liked the way it was. Everybody together, suffering but having

fun, working hard. Having it all in front of us. Everyone was at their best when they came to Paris, but now . . . "

Hillary was sure he was holding back. "What is it you really miss?"

"Oh I don't know. Anderson and Pound, Scotty and his crazy wife, my friendships with a lot of people who don't speak to me anymore. Dammit all, Gertrude's cold as hell but after what she did to me in her book she shouldn't complain."

"And Pauline?"

"Pauline's swell, but I can't abide . . . "

He didn't finish the thought. After awhile they parted as they always did, Hillary leaving and Hemingway staying to drink. This time, she thought, maybe he won't. Scott told her that when Hemingway was writing and it was going well he didn't drink until after his evening meal, like Joyce. Hillary had seen the Irishman and his family a few times but was never introduced to them, and since she and Sylvia Beach didn't get along for reasons that were never very clear to her, it seemed unlikely she would have the opportunity to meet him. Before she left Lipp's, Hemingway asked her to have dinner with him the next night. There was a friend he wanted her to meet. "Journalist," he said, "nice fellow."

"Someone to spend my lonely nights with until Allen returns to the continent next month?" Hillary asked.

"Of course not," he told her. "He's a friend of Pauline's sister Jinny, a very decent young man you might enjoy knowing is all."

Hillary met Hemingway and the "young man" on Thursday at L 'Escargot where, Hemingway told her, the "oysters are perfection." The reporter, whose name was Guy

Hickok, was a correspondent for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. He did not know Pauline's sister Jinny. But he had known Hemingway since Hemingway came to Paris in 1922. Hemingway's fealty to Guy was compelled by many shared interests, as Hillary was to learn over dinner. A couple of years older than Hillary, Hickok was a sports fan, a writer, and sported a moustache that was a shade or two darker than Hemingway's. After only a few minutes of conversation, Guy showed himself to be a raconteur who could talk enthusiastically and knowingly about boxing, the horses, and French wine. His fine spirit was so engaging and non-threatening that Hillary understood why Hemingway liked his company and didn't feel upstaged by the man's stunning conversational skill. But Hillary held her suspicion that Hemingway wanted to make a match between her and his old friend, a suspicion Hickok, by all outward appearances, did not share. He was simply there to have a good time with an old acquaintance and his pretty American friend. Hemingway wasn't interested in food right away and Hillary suggested she buy them all a bottle of Dom Perignon as a gift in celebration of the two reporters' reunion after nearly two years. Hickok was all in favor, and Hemingway, who in his former poverty would have bristled at a gift from a woman, happily went along. By ten o'clock their little party was in full swing.

"I think we'd better order some food, Ernest," Hillary suggested.

"Yes, and I'll buy the next bottle of the ole Dom," Hickok said enthusiastically. Hemingway had been looking back and forth between Hillary and Guy in an obvious attempt to find some interest on the part of either of them and, apparently finding none, assented to Hickok's suggestion with a curt nod. The restaurant was crowded; Parisians ate late. "Hem was goddam glad to give up the newspaper business. I can't

tell you how many times he told me, Hillary, that my profession would ruin him."

"I imagine human interest material from Europe for a daily newspaper is quite a bit different than what Ernest came here for," Hillary said. Fearing an unintended implication, she added, "Journalism is too important for people who would rather be doing something else."

"Oh really?" Hemingway asked sarcastically. He was annoyed with her. "I didn't know you were keen on journalism."

"I am, you know. I have a dear friend who works for *The New York Times*. He was just in the Middle East."

"I thought I knew so much about you . . ."

"Apparently not," she retorted smugly. Hickok watched this exchange with growing interest. He took over Hemingway's side of the conversation.

"What's his name?" he asked. Hillary gave him my name. "I've heard of him, read his stuff. He's quite good." Hickok turned to Hemingway. "Hem, you faker. You told me you know this girl like your own face."

"Really?" Hillary looked at Hemingway with surprise.

"Oh, come off it," Hemingway responded sharply. "I only told him I was fond of you and know you well. That's all."

Their food came, and another bottle of champagne. Hemingway said the oysters had filled him up. They all had the same thing, a beef casserole with onions and mushrooms in a thick wine sauce, and Hemingway cleaned his plate. By the time they finished and the waiter brought the cheese, Hillary's head was swimming, her movements seemed in slow motion, and she felt nauseous. She noticed that Hickok too

had become less effusive than he had been an hour earlier and that Hemingway continued to be sullen and sober. Hickok tried to patch over the silent argument going on between Hemingway and Hillary, at first by agreeing with Hemingway that his comments were not nearly as familiar as he had made them sound, and later by ignoring Hemingway completely and concentrating on Hillary. She reciprocated, and they talked for thirty or forty minutes while Hemingway drank champagne and ignored them. Finally he spoke.

"Why don't you two go somewhere and enjoy yourselves. I'm going to have a cognac and get on home."

He was so transparent Hillary was disgusted. Hickok was a nice enough man but even with no Allen MacDermit in her life Hillary would not have entertained the notion of spending time alone with him. But she didn't demur. She looked at Hickok and asked if he would walk her home, which he enthusiastically agreed to do. They left.

Hemingway sat for awhile and then noticed someone he knew at the bar and went over and ordered cognac. He knew Hillary was perturbed with him, but he told himself he had only her best interests at heart. Allen MacDermit was not merely unworthy of her trust. Hemingway had heard enough about the man from friends in Paris to feel certain that he was bad news. Guy Hickok was the most promising substitute he could come up with, a real man whom Hillary Malone could not tie up like a parcel in her narcissistic sojourn through which she continually demeaned herself. If she would just spend some time with the man, she would see the possibilities -- not necessarily any Hickok presented, but that there were alternatives to Allen MacDermit.

He exchanged a few offhand remarks with the couple he knew at the bar, drained his glass, and waited for the ever-decreasing burn and the aroma in his nostrils. Then he went home to Pauline. The hell with Hillary Malone, he thought as he walked the crowded streets. She wants friends but doesn't want their care and concern.

Two days later Hemingway ran into Hillary on the street outside Gertrude Stein's apartment. She was leaving and he was opening the gate to the small garden to enter. She greeted him warmly. "Remember," she said, "you promised you would introduce me to Pauline."

"Sure. Of course," he said.

"I like your friend Guy, Ernest."

"That's great, just great." He didn't seem to want to talk. "He's for real," he said stiffly.

"Very much so."

"What the hell . . ."

"Not the best lover I've ever known, but full of energy. You know, a bit rough at first but he calmed down."

"For God's sake, Hillary. . ."

"Goodbye, Ernest. See you soon." She closed the gate, Hemingway on the garden side and Hillary on the street outside rue de Fleurus. Walking away quickly, she hated her deception but felt he deserved it. She wondered when or if she would ever tell Hemingway that Guy Hickok walked her to her door, uttered a few words of thanks for a delightful evening, and bounded down the steps to the front door of the building as if he was in a race and had never touched champagne in his life.

Hemingway's next letter to Scott Fitzgerald, never explained by his biographers, is a strange communication. In it he refers to "pimping" in Paris and it must be assumed that Hemingway was not referring to his own reveries but to those brought about by his intervention in others' lives, particularly on the evening he was convinced he had "pimped" for his old friend Guy Hickok and gotten him into Hillary Malone's bed. Ironically, Hillary received a letter from Scott just after the New Year that was as strange as the letter Scott had received only a few weeks earlier from Hemingway. Hillary wrote to Maria, who had gone back to New York with Gene, and alluded for the first time to her love affair with Scott.

Maria --

Allen returns in a few weeks and you'll be happy to know how much I look forward to seeing him. It has been a long fall and winter. I never really told you much (did I tell you anything at all?) about the time I spent with Scott Fitzgerald. I want you to call him for me. Just see that he's all right. I got the strangest letter from him. A couple of examples: "I'm very hard at work and missing a lot, people mostly. One day when we see each other again I'll explain why we're here in Delaware and not in that special place you are lucky to call home. I'm at my end you see. It doesn't seem worth all the nonsense." With some hesitation I include the following excerpt: "I need companionship girl, some real loving tenderness, as there isn't any here. I think about you, like tugging on a chain. You have the treatment girl, you really do. It could cure me sure."

It frightens me Maria. I know Scott is unstable as hell but all in all he's a good man who endures more than he's ever told anyone, including me. Please be a dear friend and call him. Let him know a lot of people love him, or something equally encouraging. I'll write again after Allen returns to Paris and in the meantime I look forward to hearing from you.

Love,

Hill

Maria called Fitzgerald and gave him the essence of Hillary's letter, telling him he

was lucky to have a friend like her. Fitzgerald was sullen and apologetic. He told Maria that he hadn't been drinking and things were "all around bad" for him lately. He promised to write to Hillary immediately and set things straight. Maria cabled Hillary: "FSF fine. Just wants booze. Will write soon."

Standing in her white satin robe with a cup of coffee in her hand, Hillary took a step back and looked at the painting again. She had been working on it since Christmas and now, just a day before MacDermitt was due to arrive from London, she admitted it was finished. Drawn from memory with scant help from the only two photographs she had, it was a portrait of MacDermitt, seated, looking straight ahead, his left shoulder forward with the elbow on a table or desk, his right hand holding the left hand in the lower left corner of the canvas. Hillary again walked around in front of the picture and wondered if he would like it. The furrow in the brow and the intensity of his expression were uncharacteristic of the public MacDermitt. It could have been captioned "don't tread on me." As was true of her earlier efforts, the perspective was slightly skewed, but no one detail seemed more than just a little bit off center; it was the first sweep of the eye which caught the distortion, the effect of looking at the subject through a slightly defective lens. Hillary laughed to herself. Either he would like it and hang it in his home or he wouldn't like it and hang it somewhere else in his home. MacDermitt showed enormous appreciation for each of the small gifts she had given to him.

He telephoned her the next afternoon. "I'll call for you at seven, if that's still convenient."

"Allen, would you mind if I met you at your house?"

"Of course. That's fine. Did you miss me, Hillary? I mean, I received very few letters."

Hillary's voice was a whisper. "Of course I did, darling. Very much. How is your mother?"

"She'll live a long time, but not very happily I'm afraid," he told her. "We had to move her from her house in the country, where the servants can no longer properly care for her and where the local doctor cannot call on her as frequently as she needs him, to a private sanitarium in the north of England. There she can live comfortably and get the attention she needs." MacDermitt coughed, and at her end of the line Hillary wondered if he was grappling with some deep emotion. "For her, leaving the house was an admission that death is close." MacDermitt paused again. "Thank you, Hillary. Thank you for asking. I'll be waiting here for you at seven."

When she hung up, Hillary glanced at the painting over by the door, wrapped in brown paper and tied with string, and went into her bedroom to do her hair.

MacDermitt liked the painting. That evening, after taking the wrapping paper off the picture, he put it on a mantel in front of a large gilt mirror and stepped back to admire it, then walked over and put his arms around Hillary. "It is splendid, Hillary. Very fine. And I am honored you chose to invest your talent in a portrait of me."

It might be supposed that after an absence of many months a man in love would rush his mistress off to the bedroom and take her out afterwards for a late supper, but Hillary wasn't surprised at all when MacDermitt told her he had arranged for them to have dinner with Francois and Stephanie Bourgin at Maxim's. As passionate and skillful a lover he was, he never rushed intimacy. That self-control was both a marvel and an

irritation to her. Hillary knew that much later, when they returned home, he would take her hand and walk to the bedroom slowly and purposefully, and then and only then unleash the energy she had never experienced with another man.

Although MacDermid told the Bourguins about his wonderful gift, and insisted they return to his home after dinner to see it, the Bourguins never made it to MacDermid's house that night. Dinner was enjoyable enough that MacDermid acceded to the Bourguins' suggestion that they go dancing at a club nearby. Once there, however, the reverie turned ugly. Stephanie had three cognacs in a row and got quite tight. Her husband seemed completely unconcerned when her voice became shrill and she began slurring her words to the point of near incomprehension. Hillary tried her best to calm the woman down.

"Stephanie, would you join me in the ladies lounge?" Hillary glanced at MacDermid and saw his approval at this suggestion.

"I don't need to go," Stephanie said, shaking off the hand Hillary had placed on her forearm. "You're just trying to get me to shut up."

Stephanie quieted down for a few minutes, but when the band reassembled after a break and started playing, Stephanie stood up unsteadily and stepped behind MacDermid's chair. "Dance with me, Allen."

MacDermid looked over his shoulder at her with barely suppressed contempt. "It would be wise to sit down," he said calmly.

"I don't want to sit down!" she nearly screamed.

"Oh please shut up and sit down," Bourgin told his wife in French.

"Come on, dance with me," she told MacDermid and began pulling on his sleeve.

MacDermitt stood, took the woman's arm, stepped behind her, and twisted her arm behind her back. Hillary saw his teeth clench with rage and he only twisted harder when Stephanie let out a muffled cry that he was hurting her. He walked her to her chair and she sat, grimacing with pain. MacDermitt leaned his face down next to her ear and said "Shut up, you hear me?" She began to cry and her husband started to say something to MacDermitt but stopped when he saw MacDermitt resume his seat with a look on his face that made clear he wouldn't tolerate any objections. His lips were so thin they had almost disappeared, and his fists were clenched. Hillary was horrified but she said nothing. Stephanie quieted down and Bourgin uttered something about the lateness of the hour. Hillary was dumbfounded that that was all he could say after their host had nearly broken his wife's arm.

"Are you all right?" she asked Stephanie, who nodded her head and spoke to MacDermitt.

"Allen, I'm terribly sorry. I can't drink. You know that." Hillary gazed at her with disbelief.

"I'm the one who's sorry, Steph. Maybe you don't know the difficulty I have with scenes in public places. Or hysterical women."

"It was unforgivable," Bourgin muttered, leaving them to guess whose behavior he was talking about.

Hillary didn't mention the incident after they returned to MacDermitt's house, but she supposed it influenced the way the evening played out. When they went into the bedroom, where Hillary expected their long absence from each other to produce a robust passion, MacDermitt was unusually gentle and patient, waiting for her to reach his

level of arousal before moving more gently over her body than he ever had before, deliberately and slowly, his intention obviously to bring them to a mutual and concurrent release. He wasn't cruel or mean-spirited, his body said to hers, and any brief explosion of temper she witnessed was anomalous, contrary to his true nature. MacDermitt's mood swings were legendary back in London, but in France he had seldom exhibited the kind of rage Hillary saw that night. As quickly as he could reach the flashpoint of anger he could change abruptly and demonstrate civility and kindness. Consequently, what Hillary perceived as a deliberate attempt to show her he was not cruel or blackhearted was nothing more than an automatic and quite unconscious adjustment in MacDermitt's personality, as though everything was fine and nothing had happened to suggest otherwise.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

MacDermitt's vicious behavior at the nightclub preoccupied Hillary, and doubt about his true nature consumed her through February and March. By the time spring arrived, however, it was as if nothing had happened to cast doubt on his stability or temperament. Hillary pushed the scene in the nightclub to the furthest recesses of her consciousness until it disappeared. In February, MacDermitt threw a large dinner party for twenty eight friends, artists, gallery owners and museum curators. She could tell it was important to him when he asked her to purchase a new gown for the occasion.

"And of course, put it on my account at the shop," he said.

"I have my own money, Allen," Hillary replied tersely.

On the evening of the dinner party MacDermitt was preoccupied, nearly obsessed, with the neckline of Hillary's dress, but she ignored his continual staring at her bodice and his offhand remarks about it. Later at dinner, according to custom, he seated her at the end of the table opposite him with fourteen people on each side. He had arranged a surprise for her. Awareness of it rippled across the table in whispered undertones before Hillary noticed what it was. She finally looked up and saw what the guests were talking about. Above the ornate marble fireplace, framed by two long candles, hung Hillary's portrait of MacDermitt. It was illuminated by a small museum light.

MacDermitt rapped the side of his wine glass with a spoon and stood. "I would like to share with you the gift Hillary presented to me when I returned from London last month," he said, extending his arm upward toward the mantle. "All of you appreciate fine art. That being so, I am sure you join me in my admiration for this portrait," he said,

raising his glass to toast Hillary.

Hillary felt like crying, as much from pride as embarrassment at having an object she perceived as a private thing and a personal gift suddenly thrust into public. The people nearest her end of the table began asking her questions about her work. She deflected their questions. Rather than feel elation at the compliment MacDermitt had paid to her, she was sullen. The dinner party droned on around her but she had little to say. Although at the farthest end of the table from MacDermitt, at one point she did hear something he said to the woman sitting to his left.

“I will be returning to my house in Nice next month. For the whole season.”

Later, over desert, Hillary took advantage of a comment someone made about Nice. “I plan to spend part of my summer there,” she told that person loudly enough for MacDermitt to hear.

As happened the year before, the whereabouts of her friends had as much to do with Hillary's decision to go to Nice as did her feelings for MacDermitt. All those who might have kept her in Paris were gone. Stein told her that Scott was in the States working on *Tender is the Night*, but what Stein did not know was that he intended to move to Paris for the summer to work on it. In March, Hemingway sailed for Havana, Cuba. He had purchased a house in Florida on the island of Key West, where he and Pauline planned to settle. In April, Dos Passos met Katharine Smith, an old friend of Hemingway's, at their home in Key West. He married the next year. It was the growing realization that Hemingway, Scott, and Dos had left Europe more or less permanently which caused Hillary to worry most about her commitment to emigre life in France. Nevertheless, whatever place of domicile she might choose, she had no intention to

return to America. Hillary knew also that her relationship with MacDermitt, especially if they married, would effectively end any chance of renewing those friendships that she once assumed would last a lifetime.

Allen MacDermitt sensed Hillary's despair. During their first month in Nice he was extraordinarily solicitous of her wishes, almost obsequious in his devotion to her needs. But when Hillary lost interest in sex, and days went by without any intimacy between them, MacDermitt withdrew from her. He was not actively unkind in any way, he simply left her alone and went about his business, always asking her to join him but never insisting. Sometimes Hillary did join him for a short cruise or day trip but, more often than not, she remained behind. When MacDermitt was away Hillary was happier, but she didn't draw conclusions from this. She chose instead to believe that the time alone merely gave her the opportunity to paint and read, allowing her to reclaim the emotional balance which her feelings of isolation tipped toward depression.

Early in June MacDermitt threw a large party and invited nearly two hundred people. He told Hillary about it but didn't seek, nor did she offer, her opinions about any aspect of the enormous gathering. On the morning of the party Hillary felt she was in the way, as caterers arrived with food, an orchestra came and began setting up, and two trucks full of extra tables and chairs filled the front drive. She didn't know where MacDermitt was. As had become his habit, he rose early, before the first light, and caught up with her later in the morning. Hillary changed her clothes and went to the garage for a car. She wanted to get away for the rest of the day, to be out of the way. In the garage she noticed that the car MacDermitt drove was there. She couldn't understand why she hadn't seen him around the house.

The sun was warm on the back of her neck as she drove down the steep road to the coastal highway and turned east toward Monte Carlo. She stopped at a small bistro by the roadside and had grilled fish and a glass of wine. Then she drove up the mountain, along the Moyen Corniche, to Eze, and spent several hours in the shops. Watching couples holding hands as they walked the stone paths of the old village, Hillary felt guilty about the chill she had thrust into her relations with MacDermitt. She decided she had to stop punishing him for her horrible state of mind, which after all he had had no hand in shaping. Her recurring loss of momentum toward a life of her own making was not his fault. He had tried to cheer her. Only when her mood had sunk lower and appeared unshakable did he give up. He hadn't complained about her disengagement from him; he responded by leaving her alone.

In the parking lot outside the medieval fortress of Eze, Hillary noticed for the third time a young man loitering near her. He wasn't following her in an obvious way but suddenly, there he was again, glancing away when she stared at him. Hillary never gave any thought to the risks a young woman took traveling alone in that part of the country, but now she felt vulnerable. On the way down the mountain she slowed down twice to see if anyone was following her. The road behind her was clear.

When she returned to the eastern side of Nice, parked the car in MacDermitt's garage, and walked up the stone steps to the first terrace, Hillary saw that everything was ready. Two dozen tables with bright blue covers dotted the expansive lawn below her. On the north side, which abutted a solid wall of rock and formed a natural alcove, musical instruments leaned against empty chairs and a few of the musicians stood in a group near one of the bars. Lanterns were strung from overhead wires across the

terrace and onto the lawn below. She went inside the house and found MacDermid in the living room making himself a drink.

"Where have you been?" he asked harshly.

Hillary ignored his anger and put her arms around him. She kissed him. It was their first kiss in many days. "I'm going to take a bath, Allen. Would you bring me a whiskey and soda? Everything looks ready and the party's two hours off. Surely you can take a few moments."

He smiled at her and she went to their room. A few minutes later she was shocked when the maid tapped on the door and entered with Hillary's drink on a tray. She dismissed the woman, drank the whiskey in three swallows, and began to dress for the party. When she was nearly ready, MacDermid came into the room in a hurry. He smiled at her as he crossed to the bathroom, went in, and shut the door. She heard the shower running as she finished her hair and makeup. She wanted to leave before he came out of the bathroom to dress for the party, unable to bear another prolonged silence or, worse, having to pretend warmth after being snubbed so badly. He knew exactly what she had in mind, he knew she was reaching out to him to revive their intimacy. His crude retribution startled her.

Hillary hated the party. Apparently, it was a great success because at least a dozen people told her so. At the end of the night, after ignoring Hillary for hours, MacDermid stood by her side with his hand around her waist, smiling and nodding as the last guests departed. One of the servants turned out the string of festive lights scattered across the lawn after the musicians, all slightly drunk, packed themselves into a panel truck and roared down the hill toward Nice. MacDermid walked up to one of the

bars, poured two Cointreaus, and escorted Hillary into the house and to their room.

As she prepared for bed, Hillary watched MacDermid undress slowly, deliberately, in no hurry. He didn't talk to her or look her way as she sat on the edge of the bed and pulled off her clothes, threw them onto a nearby bench, and pulled on a nightgown. MacDermid walked over to the bed with one of the glasses in his hand, gave it to her, and waited for her to take a sip. She handed the snifter back to him and he took it in his left hand. At the very moment his fingers surrounded the bowl of the glass his right hand cut through the air and crashed against Hillary's left cheek. Her head snapped to the right and before she could bring it completely upright again, his hand came back across her right cheek with stunning force, throwing her whole body back onto the bed. MacDermid threw the glass behind him and Hillary heard it crash in the distance, heard it despite the ringing in her ears and the horror of seeing her own blood on the front of her negligee. The large diamond ring on MacDermid's right hand had cut the side of her mouth and the wound, although not long, was deep. She felt the corner of her mouth throbbing and started to raise a hand to it, but MacDermid stood over her in a threatening pose. She lay perfectly still, terrified.

He dropped the towel from around his waist and hitched up her nightgown, falling on her heavily. His wide tongue licked the wound at the corner of her mouth and she could hear him suck her blood into his mouth when he kissed her. She did not fight him as he yanked her legs apart, first one and then the other, and pushed himself into her. Hillary cried out once. It was not a cry of pain or remorse or a plea for help. It was the nearly silent shriek that occurs in the middle of the night when the worst nightmare of one's life reaches the point where the unconscious horror will either stop the heart or

bring the sleeper abruptly into the world of light, the scream we almost begin when we bolt upright in bed, eyes bulging, drenched in sweat, sure that the moment will overtake the rational mind.

Hillary drifted, heard MacDermid pant into her ear, drifted again, and heard him moan, drifted yet again when she felt his weight leave her. She thought she heard a crackling fire, and then the voice of her Aunt Eve, and again a crackling fire. She was in another, yet familiar, place. Indians hovered around her after she passed out, watching her intently. Only when they were sure she was safe did one of them pick up the gourd she spilled on the ground in front of the fire and return its contents to the boiling pot hanging over the flames. She awoke, stood on wobbly legs, and walked unsteadily across a rocky bluff until she fell down on the sand and passed into a deep, dreamless sleep, entered a place where there was no pain or hunger or ignorance, alone at last with the beat of her solitary heart in the world of the dead.

She awoke early, before light, and saw MacDermid lying naked across the silk coverlet at the foot of the bed. There were small brown streaks of dried blood all across the bedclothes which Hillary thought might have been caused by her struggle to free herself, but which in fact only outlined her slow, side-to-side crawl up from the foot of the bed where she was raped by her lover. How calm she felt. This calmness frightened her. She stared again at MacDermid's lifeless form at the foot of the bed and decided to take advantage of his deep sleep. Walking silently to the bathroom, she went in and pulled the door shut, made the water as hot as she could tolerate, and stepped into the shower. The mirror above the vanity confirmed painful sensations. Her eye was blackened and her mouth was swollen at the side as if it were packed with

a wad of cotton batting. In the eerie calm which enveloped her she did not imagine packing her things and taking the next train to Paris, did not think of leaving the man who had struck her and forced his way into her so savagely. Hillary's reconstruction of what occurred early that morning began almost at once, as the water washed lathered soap from her head and shoulders and along the length of her body into the drain, much the way mornings wash away sins, even terrible ones, that transpire between lovers late at night in the heat of arguments. He would explain it, she told herself. It would have something to do with jealousy or wounded pride or a feeling of abandonment. He would explain himself and she would forgive him. Her pain would bring them closer to each other.

When Hillary walked into the bedroom, MacDermitt was gone. Standing perfectly still, she heard the shower in the guest suite next door. Hillary decided he had left their room to shower elsewhere so he wouldn't disturb her bath. She dressed slowly. More places on her face hurt now that she was more relaxed. She spent a long time at the vanity on the far side of the room trying to hide her discolored eye and swollen mouth. The best she could do was to make her mouth appear slightly off-center. The discoloration around her eye could not be hidden. She gave up and put on a pair of sunglasses, pulled a scarf over her head, and walked up the stairs and out to the terrace.

MacDermitt was on the telephone and as she reached the table he hung up and turned to her. "That was McGiver," he said testily. "I swear, Hillary, sometimes I think they would like to ruin me the way they get involved in unnecessarily risky ventures." He got up and held a chair for her, leaned down and kissed her on the cheek, and

resumed his seat. "Would you like breakfast or just coffee?" he asked calmly. Hillary had not known what to expect from him, but she was dumbfounded that he was acting as though the horror in the night had never happened.

"Just coffee I think," she responded calmly. "Did you enjoy your party?" Her tone was indifferent, the way a wife asks a husband if he had a hard day at the office.

"Not really. But our guests did, I think." MacDermitt cleared his throat. "You know, Hillary, I've been thinking. You must miss Paris. Gene and Maria can't join us until late July or early August and that makes a long summer for you away from home. Wouldn't you like to go back with me for a visit?"

Hillary's torpor ended. In a flash of self-disgust, she sat rigidly and watched MacDermitt butter his toast and talk about going to Paris for a week. She was determined to remain composed. It was now discipline, rather than hypnotic myopia, that enabled her to refuse to give in to feelings that could grow quickly to hysteria if she didn't maintain control. If the best way to get home is with him, she thought, then I'll merely credit his wise insight and ask to leave as soon as possible, for once there I'll be free to leave him. One might wonder why Hillary assumed she could not escape from MacDermitt in Nice, where she had many friends. But she did. She irrationally assumed she could leave him only in Paris.

They took the train that night, the second overnight journey for Hillary from the station in Nice. She was relieved when MacDermitt yawned twice during dinner as the train sped along the coast toward Marseille and climbed the foothills, and even more relieved when, returning to their compartment and using the toilette, she came through the door and found MacDermitt asleep in the top bunk. Hillary remained awake most of

the night, her state of mind alternating between confusion and conviction about what had happened and what she must do. She needed a friend. She needed Maria. At sunrise, she left the compartment and went to the dining car. It was unusual for her to rise in the morning before MacDermitt, and she decided that when he came looking for her, she would simply tell him she was starved and didn't want to wake him. After finishing her breakfast, she remained for another cup of coffee and read the paper. At six-thirty MacDermitt walked into the dining car and sat down across from her. He said nothing about her absence, or about anything else. He seemed content to order coffee and a croissant and read the newspaper. When he absentmindedly asked her how she had slept, and she lied and said she had slept just fine, he merely nodded, took a sip of coffee, and went back to the paper. A few minutes later, Hillary interrupted his reading.

“While we’re in Paris, I’m staying at my apartment, Allen.”

“As you wish,” he said without lowering his newspaper.

Maria Jolas told me once that the biggest regret of her life was that she didn't insist more strongly, after seeing Hillary that day, that she move immediately and permanently back to Paris and stop seeing MacDermitt. As soon as the train arrived at Gare d'Lyon Hillary took a taxi to her apartment, declining MacDermitt's suggestion that his driver drop her on the way to his home. She called Maria right away. Maria told her she had an appointment that would go through lunch and asked Hillary if she could come over after that, around three. Hillary told her no, she would go to the Jolas' apartment instead. Neither her tone of voice nor her words alerted Maria to anything untoward, and Maria accepted Hillary's explanation that MacDermitt had some urgent business in Paris and Hillary naturally could not pass up an opportunity to come back

with him for a few days

Hillary reached Maria's flat shortly after three. She wore a scarf around her head, tied under the chin, and a large pair of sunglasses. When she opened the door, Maria thought Hillary's glasses and scarf were a bit unusual, but the way Hillary walked, with her shoulders hunched and her head tilted downward, was strikingly different. The two women embraced. Maria took Hillary's light jacket. Turning from the closet door, Maria saw Hillary's face for the first time. Hillary was holding the glasses and scarf in her left hand and standing straight, looking directly at her friend. Maria's eyes immediately filled with tears.

"Jesus God, what happened to you?" she asked, and ran up to Hillary and put her arms on her shoulders. She tilted Hillary's head toward the window for a better look. Hillary's eye was purplish and mottled, her lip swollen and discolored. A deep cut on her cheek was an ugly crimson. Her lovely oval face was badly distorted. "Oh Hillary. . ." Maria started to cry and held Hillary tightly to her. "Oh Hillary," she repeated, and it was only then that Hillary too began to cry, loud whelps which shook her entire body, her head buried in Maria's shoulder until the wrenching sobs gave way to moaning. Maria walked her over to a couch by the window and sat down next to her, continuing to hold her. Hillary pulled away gently, got up, went to her purse which had dropped to the floor, pulled out a handkerchief, and came back to the couch.

"Hillary, how did this happen?"

"I know I have to tell you," Hillary whispered.

"Was it Allen?" Maria was enraged but controlled herself.

"Oh, Maria," Hillary began, but her lips quivered uncontrollably and she stopped.

"Yes," she said. "It was Allen."

"He beat you?" Maria wanted there to be no doubt.

"Worse."

"What do you mean 'worse'?" Maria asked slowly.

"Maria, Allen hit me and then forced himself. . . I mean he. . ."

"He *raped* you?"

Hillary was suddenly calm. "I doubt you can say that a man can rape a woman in the bed they share, but he hit me and then fell on top of me and forced himself. . ."

Maria began to cry again. In a few minutes she regained her composure and looked at Hillary. "Where is he? Did you really come to Paris together?" Hillary told her they did, that she was staying alone at her apartment, and that she had told MacDermitt on the train that while they were in Paris she would not stay with him. "Hillary, you're not going to continue to see this man, are you?"

"I don't know. That's why I'm staying at my place, to think things through."

"Whatever is there to think about? The man beat you and raped you, for God's sake."

"I need to think about it, that's all," Hillary said defensively. "Allen is not the only man who has struck a woman or had sex with one who didn't really want it. I don't know if this is his way with women when the courtship is over or if he just lost control and won't ever lose control again. I just don't know."

"What does he say? How has he reacted?"

"I'm afraid that's the worst part, Maria. He hasn't reacted at all; he hasn't even referred to it. Other than suggesting I might want to go home for awhile, he has acted

as if nothing happened."

"He's a monster, Hillary. You can't see him."

Hillary reached out for her friend's hand and squeezed it. "It may be my fault, Maria. For several weeks I was withdrawn, depressed. There was hardly any intimacy between us. He probably had no idea how to deal with it." Hillary put her hand to the side of her mouth. Talking made it hurt. "Maria, I know he hit me but he didn't mean to hurt me. I know he didn't. The sex may have been his way to get close to me again. I don't know how much he had to drink that night. I don't know if his memory just blacked out. Maybe he can't remember because it was horrible for him too and he can't face it, and . . ."

Maria interrupted her. "You're talking nonsense Hillary, complete nonsense." She sighed loudly, exhausted and weary. "The man attacked you and you defend what he did. I cannot understand that. I cannot." Maria started to cry again and Hillary leaned over to hold her.

Half an hour later Hillary left. Seeing her to the door, Maria told her she would come by later that evening to take her to dinner. Gene was in Lyon for a couple of days. She insisted when Hillary hesitated because she didn't know what MacDermitt's plans were and she wanted to fill Hillary's evening rather than leave any opportunity for him to see the girl. Maria made herself an afternoon cocktail, rare for her, and collapsed on the sofa with it. All of her memories of moments with Hillary came back to her, the way she acted, the things she said, her strength and humor, her gentility and empathy. The woman who just left her had none of those qualities and she couldn't understand the reason for Hillary Malone's self-devaluation. Hillary who was playful

with men, the ingénue who kicked them out of her life if they tried to assert a place in it, the gentle girl who took Gertrude Stein by the arm and helped her walk when she was tired, the woman who intrigued the intriguing expatriates through sheer wit and intelligence -- Hillary had just walked out her door quiet, submissive, battered. What happened? Maria turned the question over and over in her mind. If the Hillary she had known was in Maria's position that moment, what would she do? Certainly she would be angry, and dedicated to convincing this other Hillary, this stranger, that she was rationalizing the horrific as some terrible misunderstanding, taking blame for her own abuse by suggesting she had goaded the abuser, and, incredibly, thinking about going back to Nice with a man she admitted just a few weeks before she didn't know if she even loved. Maria was certain the Hillary she had known would violently oppose appeasement. But the volatility of Hillary's state of mind had to be handled carefully. Maria's intuition told her the role she played in the next several days could be critical.

Maria could not have foreseen the surprise in store for her when she went to Hillary's apartment to take her to dinner. Her friend was lighter, happier. She told Maria she had just talked to MacDermitt and they had agreed to go about their separate business and meet each other on Sunday for the trip back to Nice. She wanted Maria's assurance that she and Gene would still join them at the end of July. The only crack in Hillary's smile was the immobility of the left side of her mouth; the only darkening of her aura of happiness was the bluish green bruise below her left eye. Maria could see that the self-induced amnesia was nearly complete. She strained for some explanation that made any sense, something that would help her understand what was happening to her young friend. Hillary Malone had crossed over some invisible line of reinvention, where

that which cannot be excused is excused, and Maria Jolas was lost in a maze of thoughts she hoped might sort themselves out to suggest an answer.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Nice familiar to tourists today is not much different from the Nice that existed in the summer of 1928. The "Riviera look" remains the same -- seven and eight story hotels and apartment buildings on the north side of the Boulevard d'Anglais, with concrete balconies and window awnings to protect the occupants from the hot southern exposure and to provide shade in rooms decorated in soft pastels. Then, as now, there was a park-like ribbon of grass and flowers and trees separating east from west-bound traffic, a wide concrete promenade overlooking the rocky beach, and, every hundred yards or so, beachfront restaurants. Some of these are named after American states -- The Florida, the New York, the Carolina. Their owners long ago removed the rocks from the beach and placed rows of comfortable chaise lounges and reclining chairs to draw sunbathers from eleven until dark to enjoy the aroma of grilled fish and rotisserie chicken, the simple foods of Provence. This was the view high up the sloping rock edifice on the east side of the city, near the top of which MacDermitt's terrace jutted. From there the Riviera stretched out toward the West, the beauty of the view amplified by the gentle white waves rhythmically moving toward the shore. From the expanse of blue water to the south the color changes to light blue, then green aqua closer to shore. In late July, Hillary sat with her morning coffee and enjoyed that vista just as much as she did the first time she walked to the edge of the terrace and looked out at it. In a few hours the Jolas' would arrive and share it with her.

During the weeks after they left Paris and returned to Nice, MacDermitt was his old self, kind but controlled during the day, and robustly passionate at night. Hillary kept her promise to Maria and didn't see him at all during week she was in Paris. After six

days, she missed him more than she thought possible. When she said as much to Maria, Maria just shook her head sadly and said nothing.

On that sunny morning Hillary was secretly elated, for she had just received a letter from Hemingway, and what made her happiest was that it was a simple, casual letter from one friend to another. It was not full of bluster and bravado or strained attempts to communicate to one to whom a letter is merely owed. She pulled it out of the pocket in her skirt and read it over again.

Dear Hillary:

God I miss Paris, and you too girl. Sick of the heat here, but going to Wyoming in six weeks and can't wait for the fishing there. Patrick was born but not easily. They had to open up Pauline like a picador's horse to get the boy out and she felt awful afterward, had a hell of a time. He looks like Count Salm and screams to bloody hell, but is on the bottle now so I'm sure Pauline can join me out west. Then we're off to Key West. Afraid I won't be back there until November at the earliest.

The new book is over 400 pages and counting. I wrote to Max this morning to give him the news. A short story would feel real good right now. Miss Scott and haven't heard from him in some time. You know he wrote *Gatsby* almost entirely in Europe and it makes me realize I need another place to rewrite this big load of mine.

I worry about you sometimes. You should write to me in Piggott, as after Wyo we'll be passing through here again, so please send some news. I worry most about Allen McDermit [sic] because I don't trust him. Have known a lot of louts you know and he's one sure. Gene Jolas wrote you were the queen of the Mediterranean, a real jewel in what's his name's crown and I thought at the time you weren't cemented anywhere firmly enough to be a piece of any royal jewels.

I keep coming back home to watch women bear children. Miracle the Europeans ever had any that lived. I miss your chestnut curls, and the way you look at me with disapproval and fondness all at once. You'll get to know Pauline. She's fine.

Best--
Hem

Hillary folded the letter with care and pushed it deep into her skirt pocket. She would transfer it to her locked jewelry box before lunch. That's where she kept all the letters she didn't want MacDermitt to know about. Although her trust was mostly restored, she remembered all too well his reaction each time Hemingway's name came up. She would do anything to avoid a scene over something as trivial as a letter from him.

Before going inside she looked out and saw a gray mass far on the horizon, over the water, and wondered if a storm was headed their way. Gene and Maria were due to arrive before lunch, so she went inside to make sure their room was ready and the lobster cooking for the cold salad she was making. Mathilde, the cook, a stout German woman who spoke no French but got by with rudimentary English, resented Hillary's presence in her kitchen. She had been openly sarcastic the day before, when Hillary patiently explained to her that she would make her favorite lobster salad for lunch but that Mathilde would have to cook the lobsters. She couldn't stand to plunge them into the boiling water. Mathilde clucked her tongue all morning over it. Where she came from in rural Germany you had no right to call yourself a cook if you wanted to make chicken but were too squeamish to slit its throat and pluck it after the blood drained out.

The lobsters, a bright brick red, were lined up on the counter.

"You wish for me to remove meat from shells?" she asked Hillary. Mathilde made no attempt to hide her displeasure that Hillary was in her kitchen.

"No, Mathilde. I'll do it. I don't mind dealing with dead things. I just don't like making them dead."

Mathilde walked out of the kitchen shaking her head.

Gene and Maria arrived shortly after Hillary finished the salads and put them in

the ice box to stay cool until lunch. That meal was always served late in MacDermitt's house. Hillary noticed a striking inconsistency. Gene appeared to be calm, but he scanned her face and bare shoulders for evidence of further brutality. "Are you all right?" he asked, concern evident in his tone. When she nodded without looking up at MacDermitt, Gene turned to his host and extended a hand. "How are you, Allen? This place is remarkable."

Maria could barely look at MacDermitt and made scant effort to hide it. For his part, MacDermitt acted as though he couldn't imagine what was bothering her. He was quiet at lunch, evincing little interest in the Jolas' Paris gossip or their news from America. He didn't even react when Maria asked Hillary if she had heard from Hemingway.

Hillary lied. "No, I haven't. I'm sure our friendship will not survive his new life.

"Nonsense. Ernest is very fond of you. I'm sure you'll hear from him."

It was at about that time that Hillary wrote Hemingway a letter, undated. It appears to be a response to his letter to her from Piggot.

Dear Hemingway:

I missed hearing from you. I imagine how a wife might be if a husband writes to a young woman she doesn't know at all, but please explain I'm just a pal.

I have a very different life now, not necessarily one you would approve. Yet the possibilities are endless for me to accomplish things that would not have been possible before. You have meant so much to me, you have no idea. If our friendship lives or dies I want you to know that. What you don't know, I am sure, is that your mark can be on people who know you as much as it is on people who read you. I doubt very much you will understand what I mean. Write me.

Affectionately,
Hillary

Hillary's week with the Jolas' was a palliative. One day they motored to Marseille to satisfy Gene's desire to try the bouillabaisse. On the way back they stopped at a secluded beach where Maria encouraged Hillary to remove her bathing suit and join her to splash naked in the gentle Mediterranean surf. Hillary looked playfully at Gene and asked him if he minded.

"You've got to be kidding," he said with a dreamy smile.

Maria had already started removing her suit. "No doubt," she said to her husband, "this will be tolerable for you." Gene busied himself spreading a blanket on the sand with his back to the women and turned only after he heard them scream when they plunged into the chill water of the early summer Mediterranean sea. He lay down on his stomach and propped his face on his palms and watched them. His wife was still beautiful and had a fine figure. She carried a little extra weight in her buttocks and had a slight paunch of a stomach but the overall effect was very pleasing. Hillary was different. She was lightly tanned from the tops of her thighs down, and from the middle of her breasts up. The rest of her was a flawless pinkish white. Her legs were long and shapely, her buttocks small, slightly rounded, and firm, her waist as thin as any Gene had ever seen. Her breasts were perfectly shaped, generous, and firm. The nipples arched upward. Gene felt a pang of envy for MacDermitt's intimacy with her. But he remembered the anger he had vowed to suppress and his eyes grew moist thinking about MacDermitt striking this beautiful, gentle woman. As worldly and provocative as Hillary was, she gave off a simultaneous aura of child-like appreciation for the wonders

around her, almost as though her carnality was a grown-up version of dressing in her mother's clothes and wobbling about in her high heels on a rainy Sunday afternoon.

The two women swam out past the breakers and Gene could only see an occasional arm arching into the air. He stood to see better. For a moment he couldn't find either of them in the blue expanse and grew worried. His heart pounded heavily. Then he caught sight of Maria, and after a minute Hillary, and relaxed. They were swimming back toward shore and he heard the women talking to each other, their voices magnified across the water's surface. He watched intently as they stood together in the shallow surf and walked toward him in the bright sunlight. When they reached the blanket, he looked Hillary straight in the eyes, forcing his own not to wander as he handed her and Maria towels. Seeing his effort, Maria laughed.

"It's all right Gene," she said, "you can look at her."

Hillary blushed as Gene allowed himself to take her in. It was a brief but intense glance up and down the length of her body. "I'm sorry, Hillary," he said with embarrassment.

"Don't be silly, Gene. If you took off all your clothes, I'd surely look."

Maria was putting on her blouse. "She is exquisite, isn't she darling?" she asked casually.

"Quite. Yes. But do you want to know what I was thinking as I watched the two of you come out of the water?" Maria laughed and told him maybe she didn't want to know. "No, no. The two of you looked quite beautiful, of course, but what I really thought was how child-like Hillary seemed. Like a young girl going swimming for the first time. It struck me."

"Gene, Hillary is less like a child than any woman I know."

"I think I know what he means," Hillary said quietly. "I've heard it before."

"From whom?" Maria asked. "Allen?"

"Yes, as a matter of fact." Hillary had finished dressing and was wiping sand from the bottoms of her feet. "He says my 'naughty' behavior is an affectation that is wasted because it is my underlying innocence that attracts men. He said most men fantasize about sleeping with girls."

Gene and Maria glanced at each other but were silent, each of them struggling with the gravity of MacDermitt's comment. It was twisted, of course. But was it, in some perverse way, insightful? And what did it have to do with assaulting Hillary. Maria spoke first.

"Is there any truth in that?" she asked her husband.

"I was wondering the same thing myself," he said, frowning at Hillary. "Is the pederast normal? I don't think so."

"Oh, I wasn't suggesting it was anything Allen has done or thought about doing," Hillary protested. "He just told me one night that I had a child-like quality that belies my effort to be worldly and sophisticated, a quality he found refreshing and . . . stimulating. When I asked him what he meant he said that, deep inside, most men have a desire to return to their boyhoods and possess the girls they thought about obsessively. Frankly, I thought it was interesting, not . . ."

"Perhaps it is interesting Hillary, but in light of . . . you know . . . Gene and I might understandably be concerned about the man talking about sex with children."

Hillary stood up. She had put on her shoes and packed her towel and comb and

brush in her carry bag. "There's nothing abnormal about it, Maria. We had a bad night is all. Things got out of hand, true. But Allen has been very loving and kind."

As they walked up the rocky ridge to the clearing where Gene had parked the car, Gene asked her if MacDermitt ever mentioned that night.

"No, not once. I think it is too upsetting for him to talk about." Gene and Maria glanced at each other once more, not knowing what to say.

"Well," Gene said affably, "Allen certainly has been reclusive during this visit."

"Yes, he's having problems with some of his projects, particularly one in Egypt." Gene asked her what kind of project. "I don't really know. I just know it's in Egypt because of telephone calls I've overheard. He doesn't talk about his businesses with me."

When they returned to MacDermitt's house, it was late in the afternoon and they were tired. Gene and Maria went to their room and told Hillary they'd see her at dinner. Hillary changed her clothes and took a book with her to the terrace, where she fell asleep after a short while. An hour later MacDermitt woke her by gently brushing a strand of hair away from her eyes. He asked her if the Jolas' were resting. Hillary sat up, yawned, and nodded sleepily. She asked him if he could spend some time with them tomorrow and MacDermitt told her he had business in the city but would try to be back for lunch. Maybe they would like to go to San Remo in the afternoon. Hillary kissed him and said that sounded fun.

"I'd like a hot bath," she said, still sleepy. "Come in after awhile please?" she asked, and took his hand. He kissed it and said he'd join her after he made a call to England. Thirty minutes later, as Hillary came out of the bathroom in a cloud of steam,

she felt fear again. MacDermitt was standing in his robe next to the bed, gazing down at an envelope in his hand. She could see it was the letter from Hemingway. Hillary didn't say a thing. She glanced at the bed where she had thrown her skirt. A corner of the envelope must have protruded from the pocket and been found.

"Piggot, Arkansas," MacDermitt read from the upper left corner of the envelope. "Didn't know you had family or friends there," he said calmly.

"Ernest is there with Pauline. Her family's home town."

"Ah, I see. Correspondence from Hemingway?"

"Yes. Want to read it, Allen?"

"Why no, of course not. All well with your writer friend I trust?" he asked calmly.

"Please read it. It is just a letter from one friend to another, although I must warn you he doesn't like you for some reason."

"That's understandable. I don't care much for him."

They made love. It was the same as before, slow and gentle at first, with the rhythm, the heat increasing steadily and building to ferocity. Hillary's sweaty breasts slapped loudly against MacDermitt's chest when, for awhile, they moved out of sync with one another. At the penultimate moment he seemed to thrust deeper into her than ever before, as if what was there was not enough. The slight pain Hillary felt was not inside her but outside. He thrust too hard against her pubic bone trying to go deeper than he could. Also, unlike himself, he rolled to his side immediately after his release came, and did not kiss her or stroke her body. He fell back on his pillow, breathing heavily, and rolled over on his side. After a long silence he patted Hillary's outstretched hand, told her he loved her, and said he would sleep awhile before dinner. As he spoke, Hillary's

eyes welled up with tears. It was not that her pubis throbbed like a bad bruise, or that she suffered frustration from any lack of satisfaction. For the first time after sex with MacDermid, Hillary felt used. She couldn't find her way out of the feeling. She finally drifted into sleep, the feeling unresolved.

They didn't go to San Remo the next day. Like all the other days of the Jolas' week in Nice, MacDermid was tied up with lawyers and advisers, either on the telephone at the house or at his office in Nice, meeting his guests only at the end of the day for dinner. When he was with them, he was polite but subdued. He made no effort to extend the friendship he developed with Gene the year before. On most nights Hillary played cards with the Jolas' at the house, or joined them for a trip to one of the clubs in town, but MacDermid never went along. He always excused himself from the dinner table by explaining he had many things to do and had to "insist on being rude." The Jolas' always assured him they understood. In fact, they didn't understand at all, but they were relieved. When he was around MacDermid's presence was stultifying, the atmosphere awkward. At the end of the week, Gene and Maria boarded the train in Nice feeling no better about their young friend's relationship with Allen MacDermid, but feeling no worse.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The scream echoed through the corridors of the house in the early morning hours. He had sent the servants away, so no one heard the anguished sound. There were no neighbors; the house was built into a mountain crag and faced the sea. Perhaps an insomniac awake on one of the yachts in the harbor detected the raw-edged wail and attributed it to the death throes of an animal in the hills above the port. More likely no one heard Hillary scream. It was not terror, nor was it pain. It was the drawn out shriek of surrender to pain, the sound a creature of the night makes when cornered, alone, and near certain death.

Hillary was on her hands and knees, MacDermitt astride her in the act of intercourse. It was not enough for him. As she screamed he thrust once again into her anus the tapered end of a wine bottle and watched through the dim light of their bedroom as a trickle of blood moved the short distance onto his phallus, which paused to accept the dropule before he pushed himself into her once again and tilted the bottle downward so he could feel it inside her. Hillary's back was drenched with sweat and when he removed the wine bottle and tossed it onto the floor, he massaged her lower back and buttocks with his hands for a few moments before collapsing against her, forcing her flat onto the bed. This was the third time he had experimented with her that way. The first time he used a small carrot from the icebox in the kitchen; the second time a section of rubber hose. With the carrot, there was only severe discomfort. The rubber hose caused pain. But this night's experiment in the surreal world their sexual relationship had become was a physical agony Hillary could not endure, enough to cause her to lose consciousness. When it was over, she was surprised she hadn't.

She ached deep inside. After he was finished with her, she spent nearly an hour in the bathroom. As she sat on the bidet after expelling a mixture of mustard and blood into the toilet, wincing as the water sprayed up against bruised and torn tissue, she stared at the glass vials on the vanity, the collection of drugs MacDermitt carried with him wherever he went and which he once took great pains to describe to her. One helped him sleep, another cleared his sinuses, a third relieved his chronic lower back pain. There were others whose purposes she forgot. She reached up and wiped the base of her palms across her eyes, trying to rub away her tears. It had gone beyond the experimentation he had proposed only a few weeks before. It had gone beyond everything. Who was she anymore? She thought it would be one thing, a bad thing she really did not want to do. But it turned out differently. It was sick and vile and capable of destroying any love or beauty. Had she even considered it could lead to this? "When did you realize it, if you did?" she asked aloud, her numb lips trembling as she sat and felt the warm water wash away the seed he spilled, wash away the blood he brought forth from his perversion. She hated herself, but she no longer knew who it was she hated.

She slept soundly that night and instead of dreaming about horrible things she dreamed about her childhood, the sun dappled orchard down the street from her parents' stately house where she and her friends played games. It was in the orchard one crisp fall evening after the start of school that she was kissed for the first time by a boy. She could visualize the scene with remarkable clarity, could see the boy's face, feel his moist lips tremble as much as hers did, and she could hear him say he wanted her to be his girl. Hillary was eleven. She could not remember the name of the boy and

in the dream she was aware of herself straining to give his image a name. In another dream, she walked through the front hall of her house, across the thick oriental rug, and stopped at a large cloisonné bowl filled with fresh flowers. She looked around, saw no one, and stole one of the flowers, bounded up the steps of the grand staircase and rushed into her room. She closed the door and locked it, took *Emma* off the shelf, and pressed the flower between two pages in the middle. It was the same book she gave to Gertrude Stein as a gift and the same flower Stein presented to her weeks later after discovering it while perusing the book. In her dreams Hillary came back to the boy in the orchard and strained to remember his name, but she couldn't.

When she awoke, MacDermitt was gone. She sat up, felt a dull ache inside, and rolled over to the edge of the bed to get to her feet. Looking around the floor on the side of the bed she could not see the wine bottle, and were it not for the pain she felt she might have thought the brutal sex was only a nightmare nestled in her sleeping subconscious along with dreams of her childhood. There would be no more denial, Hillary thought to herself. She would no longer make excuses for what MacDermitt did to her, nor accept his rationalizations. She would not debase herself one more time.

She remembered what he said to her late one night a few weeks earlier when he asked for permission to tie her hands together. After he had her bound, he slapped her buttocks so hard and so repeatedly that she almost didn't notice when he inserted an ointment coated finger into her anus, followed by his penis. She cried for an hour after he finished sodomizing her, untied her hands, and went into the bathroom to bathe. When he came back to their bed, he talked to her for the first time about what he was doing.

"I've never done that before, Hillary," he said calmly. "I've never struck a woman, or forced myself upon her either." She realized he was talking about that other night, long before. "I've only thought about such things, but I have thought about them for a long, long time." Hillary started to say something but he cut her off. "Oh, I could have paid women I suppose, but it would be only a job for them, not the kind of game it should be ideally."

"Game?" Hillary said incredulously.

"Well, yes. Yes. I have been making up all the moves though, and I want you to participate in this experiment, be a part of it, and not just idly accept what comes. You see," and he reached out to stroke her cheek gently, "we're going to stretch experience beyond the norm, take what men and women do, which is usually so boring and unimaginative, and move to new levels of pleasure."

Hillary sat up against the headboard and stared vacantly across the room. She had resisted what he said, but there was enough insinuating mystery to prevent her from rejecting it out of hand. Now her acquiescence surprised and shocked her. At first the "experiments" piqued her interest as nothing more than a slightly perverse extension of some of her own fantasies. She followed MacDermitt's lead, giving him what he wanted. But it was not an evenhanded match and after two or three weeks he became more and more distant, effecting no pretense of affection or love. In and out of bed his behavior became robotic, clinical, hurtful, until the so-called experiment led to the three nights which combined rather normal sex of one kind with violent and debasing sex of another until the pain was unbearable. Hillary lost her self or, more accurately, stood outside herself and looked at a pathetic creature unable to disengage from MacDermitt's

sadistic rituals before they destroyed all that was left of her self-respect. When she woke on those mornings in an empty bed she realized that MacDermitt had never known himself at all.

The morning she screamed out in pain, and then slept for a few hours, she did not go to the terrace for breakfast because that is what he expected her to do. He would always appear, as if from nowhere, to have a cup of coffee with her while she finished eating. That morning she bathed and changed into an outfit appropriate for travel and reconnoitered, having realized that when she arrived the month before she had let the maid unpack her bags and didn't know where many of her things were kept. Now she wanted to know where her luggage was stored, where her coats and dresses were hung, and where her sweaters, blouses, underwear, stockings, and jewelry were put away. Hillary visualized every step of a number of scenarios, from fleeing with a single change of clothes to methodically packing everything she brought with her, along with everything she had left from previous visits, for a final and complete departure. Only when she had the mental inventory complete did she leave the bedroom, walk down the hall, and go out to the terrace for a late breakfast.

MacDermitt was there, in a heavy wool sweater, looking through a stack of mail with a severe frown on his face. He got up, held Hillary's chair, and signaled for the servant to bring her coffee. Hillary sat, calmly poured a cup of coffee from the service in the middle of the table, and sat back, warming the palm of her left hand with the steaming cup. She knew what to say, just not when to say it. "You seem distracted," she heard herself say to him.

MacDermitt held out one of the envelopes from the stack in front of him. "This

came for you," he said stiffly.

Hillary saw the postmark but remained calm. She used her table knife to slit the envelope open and extract the letter. Reading the few lines was like being pulled by a rope from the deep, cold well into which she had plunged.

February 8, 1929

Hillary--

Our home is here but we're headed back to Spain and France for the summer. *Farewell to Arms* is nearly finished and I have to admit I like it. But we'll see how that goes. I rewrite the ending too much. I write all morning. Then go fishing. The town is good, whiskey and fried fish and old sods coming and going. Wonderful swell stuff. Pauline is tired of living in rented houses and talks about buying a home here. I think some uncle of hers wants to help her out with that.

Went home for my father's funeral. He did it with a gun, but maybe you know that. I had to borrow but not beg for money to get to Chicago. There are moments when I feel almost rational about things that all my life I assumed would never be approachable on any kind of emotional level, but then I slip back into the same old shit I worry about always. I've talked to Scott and he asked about you. I told him you were probably married by now to the other Scot and he told me he doubted that very much.

I sure hope you'll be in Paris this summer. I'm all full of myself again and we'll have a helluva time.

As Ever,

Hem

Hillary folded the letter and placed it in the envelope, aware that MacDermitt was staring at her. She looked up at him and shivered. The air was chill. "I'm leaving you, Allen."

MacDermitt squinted at her across the table. She could not tell if he was smiling or grimacing. "Don't you think we ought to talk about that?" he asked.

"Not really," she said as casually as she could. She was beginning to feel afraid of him again. "I'm sure you would tell me what a modern woman I am, the sort that a man like you never finds in a whole lifetime, who can accept any beating or perverse act willingly, happily, to succor a sick mind. I have been all of that, Allen, but no more. In my pathetic effort to put some meaning into my life I thought I could live through you. That was a bad mistake. With the likes of you it's tragic."

"Ah, your friend Hemingway gives you courage," MacDermitt said calmly but contemptuously.

"No, not really. He's a man who also needs more than the normal ebb and flow of life, but he chooses to find his pleasures within normal and quite humane boundaries. Wives, children, hard work, an uncertain reward, and of course, failure and success."

"I take it things are much better for him?"

"I really don't know." Hillary stuffed the letter in the pocket of her sweater and stood up. "I'm going into Nice. Before I go, though, I'm telling Mathilde to have someone move my things into the guest room at the far end. There will be no more of it, Allen. So help me God."

Hillary left him on the terrace and when she reached the door to the house and looked back she saw that a brief, brisk wind from the west had blown the stack of mail all over the table and chairs and onto the flagstone terrace, and that MacDermitt made no move to retrieve them.

At the bistro in Nice where Hillary had lunch that day she wrote me a letter. For reasons I did not understand at the time, it made me sadder than anything she had ever written to me. "You know the evening we had dinner together?" she asked.

That seems so long ago, but it really isn't. I have loved your letters. They always seem to arrive when I need them most, and your funny stories make me laugh. I have desperately needed to laugh. I've been living a dream here, not a good one, and however much I realize I've traveled down the wrong path and must go back home to Paris and start over, a hesitancy tugs at me which I cannot explain. I can't blame Allen for what Hillary has done to herself, since all he did was to point toward the blackness and guide her into it, a place he has lived all his life. Since you once claimed to love me, I won't go into the details of what the last nine months have been like, and it doesn't really matter anymore because it's over.

I have come to understand how people find themselves in ruts or horrible circumstances and even though changing things means only walking out of a room, or a house, or someone else's life, there is a paralysis because we become part of those circumstances, and they become a part of us, and we can't seem to imagine being a part of anything else. Even if it would be so much better.

I guess all this sounds strange. I'm sorry. I wanted you to know how much your friendship means to me, however much I disappointed you. Don't be a stranger. I'll be back in Paris, whether in three days or three months I'm not yet sure. Same address.

My first inclination was to find an excuse to get to Nice as fast as I could, even though that would have been difficult at what was then one of the busiest times in my career. I realized that however much Hillary wanted my friendship, she preferred it at a distance. I wrote back immediately but wrapped my concern over her disturbing letter with the kind of light news and comic anecdote she seemed to want from me.

MacDermitt implemented Hillary's request regarding her belongings and their sleeping arrangements, and by the time she returned from the city late that afternoon Mathilde showed her to her new room and told her that MacDermitt was not in and had left no instructions for dinner. Hillary asked the woman to bring her a tray at seven and then walked around the spacious suite to see where her things were, making sure nothing was missing. After a light meal she undressed, got into bed, and read, falling

off to sleep somewhere in the labyrinth of Jane Austen's prose. She did not dream, or at least couldn't recollect anything when she awoke early the next morning. MacDermitt didn't appear at the breakfast table and Hillary had a quiet morning with the newspapers, watching the wind outside whip light rain against the windows. When MacDermitt did show up shortly before lunch, he was quiet. His tone and behavior were neither warm nor cold. He asked her at lunch if her room was comfortable and if she had decided when she would return to Paris. She told him her room was fine and that she wasn't yet sure when she'd be leaving. They ate in silence. Strangely, Hillary did not feel awkward, and was not opposed to spending time with him as long as he didn't talk to her.

Two weeks went by, each day much like the day Hillary wrote to me. MacDermitt kept his distance and remained cordial and attentive, asking Hillary if he could have people in for dinner or if she would join him when he desired to entertain outside his home. Occasionally she tested him by demurring or saying that a different day would be better for her, and he always accepted her answer without comment. After one evening's dinner party, during which Hillary drank more wine than usual and felt familiar stirrings, MacDermitt read her mood and asked if he could sleep with her that night. She told him he could. She did not have to add, and didn't, that any deviation from simple intercourse would not be tolerated, and later that night, when he was finished, Hillary told him she wanted to sleep alone. He didn't protest, and left her bed and went to his own room. Hillary lay in bed feeling sated but sad. Their lovemaking had been feverish and technically satisfying, but as she turned the light out it occurred to her that they had not once touched each other's lips.

Hillary should have known it couldn't last. Ten days later, in early April, she was looking around one afternoon for a book she had started and put down. Mathilde told Hillary she may have put it in the small bookcase in MacDermitt's bedroom. Not thinking a quick look around in there would be a breach of their new arrangement, she went into MacDermitt's room to look for the book. It was not there. On her way out, she glanced at the desk to the right of the door and saw, sticking out of a stack of correspondence, an envelope with Maria Jolas' handwriting. She walked over to the desk with apprehension, pulled the envelope from the stack, and saw it was indeed a letter from Maria to her, postmarked ten days earlier, from Paris. It had not been opened.

Hillary returned to her room and paced back and forth after reading Maria's very routine letter about a trip Gene had just taken, parties gone to, and friends seen. She was nearly as hurt and disgusted as she had been after those woeful nights in MacDermitt's bedroom. Now he was trying to cut her off from the people she cared most about, the one thing he could do that would hurt her most. The bastard knew that if he could keep her there, behave himself, and keep the world out, then Hillary would begin to need him again. Who else wrote to her, she wondered? Her parents, Scott, Gertrude, Dos? She trembled, contemplating the fact that she had remained there, accepting so many things she could never have imagined accepting, simply because there was no commerce with anyone else she cared about. She assumed that MacDermitt intercepted other letters, perhaps many, from people who could have snapped her out of her perverse indolence, people she thought were too far away or too unconcerned about her. Hillary's rage became so great that she thought she could kill him. Not with a fireplace tool or a kitchen knife, but subtly, quietly, perhaps with a

chemist's powder mixed into his evening cocktail, with only a gurgling sound from deep in his throat to remind her what she had done. Hillary allowed herself the luxury of these thoughts without judging herself.

She must have paced back and forth for over an hour. When Mathilde knocked on the door of her room and was told to enter, the woman told her dinner would be ready in another half hour and asked if she would like to have a cocktail in her room or join Mr. MacDermitt in the salon? She told Mathilde she would join Mr. MacDermitt shortly. Running a comb through her hair and powdering her cheeks and moist upper lip, she took the letter from the table where she had dropped it and walked quickly and quietly out of her room, along the corridor, and into the living room. MacDermitt was in the corner under a reading lamp with a newspaper. He stood as she approached him and started to smile, but when he saw the look on her face, he froze and dropped the paper on the table next to the chair. He saw the envelope in Hillary's hand but pretended not to.

Hillary stood erect, her posture defiant. When asked if she cared for a whiskey, she ignored the question and held out the envelope so MacDermitt had to look at it. "Mathilde told me a book I was looking for might be in your room so I went there to find it. There was this." Hillary let the letter slip out of her fingers and drop to the floor. "The first thing I want to know is how many other letters have I received?"

"Hillary, dear, I meant to give you that one. Of course I did. But dammit all, things kept intruding and I forgot about it," MacDermitt said sincerely, so much so that for an instant Hillary was afraid she might believe him.

"How did a letter from Hemingway ever get through your censorship?" she

asked, aware that inherent in her question was repudiation of his innocence.

MacDermitt's tense body relaxed and he sat down in his chair. "Jean Louise was sick that week, remember?" MacDermitt asked matter-of-factly, his admission of guilt implicit in the question. "He knew not to distribute the post about the house until I had a chance to look it over, but that idiot who was here merrily went about handing out the mail."

"How many other letters?" Hillary asked calmly.

"Oh I don't know. Some, of course."

"Have you kept them?"

"No, I'm afraid not."

"Remember who they were from by any chance?" Hillary asked pointlessly.

"No. I don't." MacDermitt's voice was now as cold as hers. "I know who that one is from though," he said, pointing at the floor. "That's from your whore friend in Paris."

"Maria is my 'whore' friend in Paris, Allen?" She picked up the letter from the floor and sat down on an ottoman ten feet in front of his chair.

"Of course she is. That woman's marriage to Jolas is a subterfuge. Friends in Paris tell me he is a homosexual and she is his 'cover.' And a whore." MacDermitt raised his nose to the air in triumph, as if he were telling her something she should have figured out for herself.

Hillary felt as if she had been punched in the stomach but was rolling with it, staying steady. "What friends shared this gem of an insight with you?" Hillary asked.

"Can't remember just now," he said. "But you see the way Jolas is, don't you? I mean he is one, certainly."

"Because he's quiet and gentle, and introverted like many intellectuals, you think that makes him odd that way?" Hillary asked quietly. MacDermitt continued to sniff the air with his head up. "You can't remember anything about any other letters I've received?" she asked.

"Go to Paris, Hillary," he said coldly. "Return to your meaningless little existence and your whore of a friend, her fag husband, the writers you adore so much but who I know you merely like to fuck. Yes, do that. I'll be here, or I'll be there, waiting for you. And you'll come back to me. You will. You'll do that because I am the only one who truly loves you, the only man you've ever known who really loves you for what you are."

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

During the years of their friendship, Hillary and Ernest Hemingway often had the experience of being in the same place at the same time but then missing one another, only to come face to face a short while later. It was the exact order of these coincidences that amused them; they never met up at one place and missed each other at the next. In June, Hillary accepted an invitation from a young man to go to the races. She had met Hank Bookman a year earlier but rejected his overtures with the excuse that she was involved with another man.

"I don't care if you're seeing someone," Bookman said. "I'm not demanding a romantic liaison; I'm hoping to be friends."

Hillary believed him.

In 1926, Hank Bookman came to Paris ostensibly to study art but soon became diverted by the social opportunities available to a good looking young American man who just inherited a lot of money from a grandfather in Oregon who had owned timber. He was a little taken aback by Hillary's refusal to see him -- his invitations were seldom declined -- but accepted the role of casual friend Hillary assigned to him. When she was in Paris, she had called him occasionally just to say hello and she wrote him two short notes from Nice. When the Murphys told Bookman at the end of May that Hillary was back in Paris, he tried twice to reach her by telephone but never got her. Three weeks later he tried her number again and she answered.

"Do you like to watch horses run around a track?" he asked before even saying hello or identifying himself.

Hillary knew it was Hank Bookman, but decided to be playful. "Gerald? How are

you?"

"Very fine, thanks," Bookman replied, impersonating their mutual friend. They both laughed.

"All right, what did you have in mind?"

"The races at Auteuil. Sunday?"

Hillary laughed again and said "Why not?"

She had never been to Auteuil, had never seen a steeplechase. That Sunday afternoon was sunny and warm and the crowd large. Bookman was very entertaining, explaining to Hillary what was happening down on the track with a comic impersonation of a well-known radio announcer. Hillary had not laughed so much in a long time, but the growing excitement in the stands around them, as the start of the Grand Steeplechase approached, as well as the comfortable, non-threatening quality of Hank Bookman's friendship, permitted her to relax and laugh and enjoy the day. Bookman demanded nothing, he was well-bred and intelligent, and he had a way of asking her questions which did not make her feel like he was invading her privacy. When asked about her long time in Nice with her "friend," Hillary's expression suddenly changed -- Bookman thought it neither sad nor depressed, merely vacant -- so he changed the subject and in a few minutes had her smiling again. When the race began and she clutched his arm as they stood to follow the horses around the track, he did feel a pang of what might have been but would never be in his relationship with Hillary Malone, but he didn't dwell on it. He knew that if he ever attempted to expand the relationship beyond what she wanted it to be there would likely be no relationship at all. So he ignored the scent from Grasse, the dress with the tight bodice, the warm white nape

under the auburn curls, and accepted friendship.

On the other side of the stands, down closer to the track, Hemingway and Pauline watched the race closely and more calmly but with no less interest, for Hemingway had money on it. The afternoon was a welcome relief from the painful birth of *Farewell to Arms* and the accompanying editorial censorship, a subject he did not confine to his bitter letters to Max Perkins. He told his wife that the galley delays and the incessant hand wringing over his profanity had him feeling “like Jock Whitney’s horse Easter Hero. It’s running a distant second and gaining, but could only win if the track were a hundred yards longer.” Hemingway smiled at Pauline, pleased with the metaphor about his novel and *All Quiet on the Western Front*. He was convinced that two stories set during the war wouldn’t sell at the same time, not with Europe and America digging further into isolationism. Hillary and Hank Bookman left after the Grand, but the Hemingways stayed for more races until Hemingway’s flask was empty and Pauline’s boredom manifest.

Coincidences can be pleasing, double coincidences startling. Hank Bookman had a suggestion for Hillary in the taxi on the way back to her apartment. “I’ve been invited to the home of a famous writer for dinner this evening and would like you to go with me.”

“I don’t know . . .”

“Come on, Hillary. If you don’t join me, I’ll be the odd man out around a table full of couples.”

“Who’s the famous writer?”

“Scott Fitzgerald.”

Hillary's emotional response to this was complex. She wanted to see Scott but dreaded meeting Zelda and didn't know if she could maintain the pretense either of not knowing Zelda's husband or of knowing him only slightly, perhaps having been introduced to him at some other time. The anxiety she felt over the scenario of being together with Scott and his wife yielded to sadness over the change she had undergone since Scott last saw her. She was different. Maria Jolas noticed it and Gertrude Stein, after subtly trying to get Hillary to talk about her troubles, finally asked her openly what had happened in Nice that made her so serious and that had sapped her curiosity about everything. Scott would notice and undoubtedly be irrepressible in saying so, and any reaction like that would make any pretense about being a mere acquaintance difficult to maintain. Bookman sat in the taxi watching Hillary stare out the window as she struggled with these thoughts. He found it hard to imagine that Hillary would turn down an offer to dine with the famous American writer Bookman met at the Murphys' the year before, for he knew how much Hillary relished the company of artists. This sudden introspection on her part seemed very odd. When the taxi pulled up in front of Hillary's building and Bookman reached for his door to get out and open hers, Hillary touched his arm.

"No, don't get out, Hank. I'll be happy to join you tonight," she said. "I've met Fitzgerald a couple of times, at parties. It should be fun." Having decided on her tactic, she had to find a way to communicate to Scott that they barely knew each other. She also had to be her old self. Otherwise, Scott would discern how troubled she was and want to talk to her about it.

The Fitzgeralds had ten to dinner that evening. Hillary had never met four of the

guests and by the end of the evening hadn't even talked to those couples. Her anticipation about seeing Scott and her dread of meeting Zelda quickly dissolved and gave way to the second Hemingway coincidence when she entered the living room of the Fitzgeralds' spacious flat. Off to the right in front of a tall bookcase Ernest Hemingway was standing and talking intensely to a man Hillary had never seen before. Hem looked the same -- dark, heavily built, rugged, and confident. The woman standing on the other side of the man he was talking to was Pauline, recognizable for her boyish bob. Hillary was not aware of how rapidly she was breathing until she began to feel lightheaded. Bookman was talking with Scott but she didn't hear what they were saying. She saw only the gleam in Scott's eye as he watched her look at Hemingway, then away, then back again, as if she doubted he was really there. Scott approached her and Bookman introduced them.

"Hillary says you've met a couple of times before, Scott." With that introduction, Hillary's worry about how to communicate that simple lie to her erstwhile lover became moot.

Scott smiled mischievously and pinched his chin with thumb and forefinger. "Yes, we have met before," he said, looking at Hillary in a studied way as if trying to be certain of his recollection. "Just where was it, Miss Malone?" he asked.

"Cannes, I think," she said, giving him a warning look.

"Yes, I remember now." He turned to Bookman. "Glad you could bring her along, Hank."

"You knew I was coming with him?" she asked Fitzgerald.

"'Knew?' No. But he told me he was taking you to the races and planned to ask

you to join our merry group this evening." Scott looked across the room and called out.
"Ernest, look who's here!"

Hemingway broke off his conversation and looked over at Fitzgerald. Seeing Hillary, he smiled and walked over. As Hemingway leaned down to hug Hillary she could see Pauline over his shoulder coming toward them. The next few minutes blurred together in Hillary's later recollection of the evening. Hemingway turned to his wife and introduced her to Hillary, Scott introduced Bookman to the Hemingways, and Zelda entered the circle out of nowhere, appearing at Scott's side. Fitzgerald said nothing to his wife about their new guest, leaving it to Bookman to introduce Zelda to her husband's lover. Sometimes experiences become so thick with new data that the mind stops attempting to sort through it. That is what Hillary experienced the first ten minutes in Scott's apartment, not knowing what to say or to whom she should speak. Fortunately, the Fitzgeralds had a penchant for eating late and Hillary had a long evening to clear her head and get her bearings.

An hour later, everyone was sitting in a large jagged circle of chairs and sofas, individual conversations interrupted by an anecdote or story everyone paused to listen to. It was usually one of Hemingway's. Pauline seemed to know Hillary had been to Pamplona with the Hemingway crowd because she mentioned it in a way that communicated to Hillary that she harbored no concerns about Hillary's relationship with her husband or her involvement in his former life. Hillary didn't have an opportunity to have a word alone with Scott but noticed Zelda staring at her more than once. She sat quietly and said little.

"Tell Hillary about Morley Callaghan," Scott urged Hemingway.

"You tell it, Scott. You're the better storyteller."

"Come on, Ernest. I only write them better. You tell them better." Everyone laughed.

Hemingway smiled at the barb. "Morley Callaghan may be fat but he is damned good. A week ago I had a date to box with him at five in the afternoon. Trouble was I had lunch with Scott and John Bishop that day. We went to Pruniers and ate lobster thermidor, but we also had a few bottles of white burgundy. By two o'clock I was sleepy and knew I wouldn't make my appointment with Morley at five, so Scott and I went 'round to find Morley so I could box him right away." Hemingway looked sheepishly at Pauline. "Uh, we also had a couple of whiskeys along the way. Morley was very fine about it, agreed to one minute rounds with two minutes in between as a gesture to the condition I was in. Scott," and Hemingway shot him a dirty look, "was to keep time. See, I knew I could handle him if I could catch my breath after punching like hell with Morley for a full minute." Hemingway paused. "First he clips me good and cuts my mouth and generally messes up my face. That minute lasted forever but I wasn't about to say anything to Morley, couldn't let him know how tired I was. Finally, Scott here calls time, apologizing like a choirboy who shows up late. Turns out Scott was so interested in when I would crash to the floor he lost track of the time. So he says. Almost four minutes I had to take it from Morley before Scott calls the round."

Scott tried to say something but everyone booed him and looked back at Hemingway. "I did fall once and pulled a muscle in my arm. It hurt like hell but we went another five rounds. Morley is a real pleasure to box with."

"I thought you were tight?" one of the women asked him.

"Yeah I was, but the exercise gets rid of the alcohol and I fought my way out of it during those next five rounds." Hemingway looked at Hillary with an expression she knew well. The playful gleam in his eyes. "You've seen me box, haven't you, Hillary?" he asked.

Scott was glad for an excuse to look at her. Zelda was acting strangely that evening and he hadn't wanted to risk exciting her curiosity by paying overt attention to the beautiful woman Hank had brought with him. Hillary worried him. He thought seeing him and Hemingway would make her happy, but instead she sat through most of the evening quietly, with a lifeless look on her face. Hillary looked up at Hem, who had been standing to tell his story, and smiled. "No, I don't think so," she said so quietly she could barely be heard. "I almost saw you fight someone in Spain, but as I remember you called it off at the last minute." Now Hemingway also looked worriedly at her.

"Oh yes," he said. "I believe I was protecting a lady's honor that night." He left it for everyone, including Pauline, to guess whether it was Hillary's or someone else's. Bookman started to give a boring account of their afternoon at the races, causing a sharp look Hillary's way from Hemingway, to which she mouthed the words "yes, I was there," but Bookman was interrupted when the maid came into the room, whispered in Zelda's ear, and trotted back to the kitchen. It was just after ten and dinner was ready.

Zelda sat Hillary and Hemingway next to each other, with Pauline on the same side of the table at the opposite end, to Scott's left. She took the other end with Hemingway to her right and one of the men Hillary didn't know to her left. Hillary was relieved to be close enough to Hemingway to talk with him without having to look at him. Only after everyone more or less broke off in clusters of conversation did Hemingway

address any personal remarks to Hillary, but when he did he didn't tread lightly. "Can I assume from your presence that you've given Allen MacDermit the gate?" he asked her. He bent over his plate and ate the lamb.

"Maria Jolas . . ." Hillary paused and looked up. "You remember Maria?" Hemingway nodded. "Maria told me I should leave him. Since she knows more about the relationship than anyone but the two people in it, I suppose that gives you an idea. But no, not yet the gate. We're still struggling across the front lawn."

Hemingway smiled at the imagery but looked at her seriously. "What's wrong, girl? You're not yourself tonight."

"It has been a hard year," Hillary said woodenly.

"Hard in what way? You're the girl with the free spirit and all the money you need to have a good time, aren't you?" He looked at her profile, thinking to himself she was still one of the most beautiful women he had ever known.

"My spirits are low, Hem. I suppose the money changes the places and provides the comforts, but it can't do more. You know that by now."

"So you're ending it with MacDermit?" Hemingway asked, ignoring her previous, ambiguous remark.

"It's over, yes. But like a lot of things that hold promise and don't work out, my relationship with Allen must wind down. He's not a particularly bad man, as you think, he merely behaves in a bad way."

"Why let it go on if it's over?" he asked.

"You've gone through this kind of thing yourself, Hem."

"Yes, but Hadley. . . I mean, for Chrissake. . ."

"You're right of course. Allen is no Hadley." She said this softly lest Pauline overhear her. "Maria's reaction is the same, only she didn't loathe Allen from the beginning as you did. She had to learn to hate him."

"But for God's sake, Hillary, if the man is such a . . ." He stopped at the look she shot at him sideways, and changed the subject. "What about painting? Have you been doing any? And does the hand of the poet remain stilled?"

"I've tried to paint in the last year, but without success. I'll return to it, though. I doubt I'll ever write poetry again." She shifted in her chair as if she was uncomfortable. "Your last letter indicated *Farewell to Arms* was complete, or almost finished."

"The endgame has been awful. I negotiate words, Hillary. Max excised about six words wherever they appeared, and the battle back and forth has been utter nonsense. I wrote the way people talk but fear of censorship or worse, poor sales, had my editor and me in protracted negotiations over what is acceptable for fictional people to say in books read by us real people. We don't have to have censorship in America. Mere fear of official condemnation is enough to cause the worst self-censorship imaginable."

"What kinds of words?" Hillary asked.

"Well, Max finally allowed 'bedpan,' if that gives you an idea." Hemingway leaned toward Hillary's ear and whispered. "He wouldn't allow 'shit' or 'balls' or 'cocksucker.' The last was the worst, me suggesting 'C___S___R' and Max finally insisting on a blank line."

"That's awful," Hillary said.

"Yeah. It sure is." Hemingway looked down the table at Scott. "Scott tells me he doesn't have those problems, and I tell him he's doing the censoring himself."

"Maybe not," Hillary said. "Men do the swearing, don't they? And Scott's men are quite different from yours."

Hemingway smiled, almost laughed. "There is certainly no doubt about that. "What's next?" he asked.

"I'm going to the south in August for two weeks. One in Cannes and one in Nice with Allen. It will be our last time together."

"If you know that, then why go?" Hemingway asked irritably, unwilling to leave it alone. He couldn't understand her compliance, or why she was so lifeless. He wondered once more what had gone on between her and the Scot.

"I want to see friends in Cannes, people I intended to see last Spring but didn't. It's only a few miles to Nice, and I have more things to pack and ship back to Paris. Don't worry for me, but thanks, Hem." He looked at her. Her mouth smiled up at him but the eyes were still dull. A flame had gone out. Suddenly, Hillary's eyes grew moist. "I want to go home for Christmas. My mother has been ill, not bad enough for the hospital but not good enough to leave the house. I'm worried about her."

After dinner Hemingway and Fitzgerald had a long conversation in Scott's bedroom and when they joined the others, Scott found an opportunity to talk with Hillary alone. "Ernest says you'll be in Cannes at the end of the summer. We'll be there too. Can we meet, do you think?" Hillary told him where she would be staying, kissed him on the cheek, and went to look for Hank. She had practically ignored him the entire evening and felt guilty that she was now searching for him only to get escorted home. Always the gentleman, Bookman excused himself, said goodnight to Zelda and Scott, and walked out with her.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Hillary spent one more evening with Scott Fitzgerald. It was in Cannes at the end of August, 1929. She didn't much care if Zelda knew it was her calling him at their hotel, and so felt no relief when a young French maid answered the telephone and asked her to wait while she looked for Mr. Fitzgerald. Either Zelda was not at home or Scott cared as little as Hillary did if his wife heard him arrange a rendezvous with the young woman who had come to their Paris apartment earlier that summer. They agreed to meet at L'Oasis at eight that evening. From the moment they sat down at the table, their conversation was an exercise in contrapuntal accompaniment. Fitzgerald drank scotch, Hillary whiskey. He wanted a claret with the guinea hen, she a Chablis. When the first course arrived, and he told her his sexual existence with Zelda was nearly nonexistent and what did occur between them was bleak, Hillary suggested to him that he should count himself lucky.

"At least Zelda appears to be content with the basics of intercourse between a man and woman. I've had experiences that demonstrate that one person can defile another with impunity."

Scott wasn't listening, for he merely nodded absentmindedly and began to whine about the crippling effects of alcohol on his writing.

"I rarely drink more than a glass of wine with food," Hillary said.

When he talked about the pain he felt finishing *Tender is the Night*, Hillary merely shrugged and pushed her salad plate toward the center of the table.

"You don't seem interested in my problems," he told her as they sat in silence with their coffee.

"You're right," Hillary said. "I have been sitting here feeling a good deal like a starving child who must listen to one go on and on about the fact that his steak is too well done. I'm sorry I can't help you."

"It has not been easy for me," he responded lamely.

"Oh I don't doubt that, Scott, really I don't. It's only that you don't realize how many things you have that are very fine. A wife, a child, talent, success, money to go where you want, when you want. Things most people dream about."

"God, you sound bitter. You're being so strange. I wish you'd tell me about it."

So Hillary told Fitzgerald everything, down to the exact details of MacDermitt's sadomasochistic technique. Through the last few minutes of her exposition he sat with his head in his hands and his eyes closed. Hillary watched rivulets of tears curl down his cheeks and through his compressed lips when she described in brutal detail the object and orifice fixation MacDermitt had finally sprung on her, and when she backtracked to her conversation with MacDermitt about "experimentation" and "new levels of pleasure," Scott looked up at her.

"Please stop."

They sat and looked at each other in the nearly empty restaurant. It was almost midnight.

"Jesus," he said finally.

"He was no help."

"Jesus," Fitzgerald repeated, ignoring her humor. "Hillary, I am sorry. I am very, very sorry."

"It's all right, Scott. No one's pain is as great as one's own."

Before they left the restaurant, Fitzgerald managed to turn the conversation to lighter subjects, including the recent resurgence in his relationship with Hemingway, and he noticed, as he had many times before, that the mere mention of Hemingway's name lifted Hillary's spirits. He was sure Hemingway had never slept with her, and the slight difference in their ages seemed to rule out Hem as a father substitute. Scott was baffled at the exact nature of the relationship between them. Just before they got up to leave, he came to the point Hillary knew was inevitable. Leaning forward and speaking in an undertone, Fitzgerald asked her if she wouldn't enjoy normal if uninspiring intimacy with an old friend. Hillary brushed her hair back behind one ear and with her head lowered looked up at him. It was a familiar, flirtatious look and he felt a giddy sense of excitement, but he misread her completely. She said "no" and just stared at him. "In a few days I'm going to Nice to end things with Allen. Then I'm moving back to Paris. I want to find an intelligent and normal young man and try to fall in love with him. My adventure days are over."

At MacDermitt's house the next day she received affection, civility, and cooperation. He told her he wanted them to spend their last few days together on the *Lorelei* because to be in the house with her would arouse too many memories for him. Hillary was dumbstruck. Memories which for her evoked the blackest part of the human soul manifestly were viewed by him in a radically different way, as though he were peering through the wrong end of a telescope. She took from trunks MacDermitt had had packed prior to her arrival the few things she would need on his yacht and they drove down to the harbor late that afternoon. MacDermitt was quieter than usual but not much different, and as the launch sped out of the harbor toward the *Lorelei* and the

wind blew her hair, Hillary actually looked forward to several days sunning herself, visiting small towns along the coast, and ending things calmly. She wanted to have one last serious conversation about what had passed between them and how it had changed her but there was time enough to find the right moment.

Since it was late in the afternoon, MacDermitt told her they would remain anchored in Nice for the night and asked her where she wanted to go the next day. They always went east toward Italy, Hillary said, so why not go west? She told him she had heard of a small coastal town named St. Tropez that was supposed to be beautiful and unspoiled. He nodded his assent and went to the bridge to talk to the crew. Hillary told the steward to take her bag to MacDermitt's cabin and the man hesitated briefly as if aware that the relationship between his boss and mademoiselle was now different, but he shrugged, followed Hillary down to the master cabin, and left her there. A few minutes later MacDermitt walked in and looked unhappily surprised to see her there.

"What does this mean?" he asked.

"It doesn't mean we're going on together," she said a little too loudly. "I think, though, that we can share a little tenderness these last few days. Wouldn't it be nice to do that?" she asked. She felt like crying and didn't understand why. She was lightheaded and sat down on the bench at the foot of the bed. MacDermitt walked over and held out his hand. She took it in hers and stood up.

"It seems odd is all," he said, his voice low. "I didn't want you to leave through a slammed door but I did not expect love at the end."

"Not love. I just want to validate the good things I had with you, the pleasant intimacies we shared. I know how odd it is. In fact, I can't believe what I'm saying

either. If you want me to stay in one of the guest cabins I'll be happy to do that too. We can still have a pleasant cruise."

He told her no, he wanted her to stay. "I suppose I hesitated because it will make your departure from my life all the more difficult."

"It will make it enormously easier for me."

The sea was calm and Hillary changed into her bathing suit and went up to the deck to enjoy the cloudless September afternoon. MacDermitt joined her awhile later and made drinks while Hillary dove into the water and swam. She climbed the ladder and towed off in the warm air. One of the stewards, in a wet suit with a face mask pulled taut against his forehead, came aft to show them three fish he had speared and Hillary nodded when MacDermitt looked inquiringly at her. He told the man they would do for dinner. They talked about meaningless things until MacDermitt asked her what she had been doing in Cannes, and Hillary replied she had gone to see old friends.

"Fitzgerald, I'm sure," MacDermitt said in an offhand way.

"Yes, as a matter of fact."

"He must be quite taken with you." MacDermitt got up to make himself another drink. A large boat passed close by and he returned the wave he received from a man standing near the bow. He sat down next to Hillary and asked, "Isn't he?"

"No doubt," Hillary said, wondering where MacDermitt was headed with this stale source of friction between them. He dropped it, patted her just above the knee of her left leg, stood up, and excused himself. She walked over to one of the lounges and lay back, brushing her still wet hair away from her forehead and arching her back. The cool water, hot sun, and whiskey started to work on her and she fell asleep after a few

minutes.

When she awoke the sun was descending toward the Cap d'Antibe and the air was much cooler. In another month one would need a sweater out on the water at that time of day. She had brought a caftan wrap on deck with her and slid it over her head, still feeling drowsy. Walking toward the entrance to the cabins, she passed the steward who had caught the fish, now in his pressed white slacks and shirt.

"The cook is making a wonderful dish for your dinner," he told her in French. "I hope you will enjoy it."

Hillary thanked him and descended the stairs to the cabin below.

Early that evening, Hillary and MacDermitt made love. It was quite unlike the last time. His passion never escalated to ferocity, and he was gentle until the end. When he got up from the bed to take a shower before dinner, Hillary felt a second's doubt about the wisdom of her decision. He had hurt her, hurt her badly, but he also had told her beforehand that he wanted to do unconventional things. She could have left him at any time but she didn't. Now, just three or four days before she would permanently leave his life, he appeared completely normal. She knew she would leave him, that the break would be permanent. But for the first time Hillary felt that MacDermitt's absence from her life would be a loss.

The fish were baked Provencale style, with tomatoes, peppers, mushrooms, and a white wine and lemon sauce. Hillary had never eaten better fish. MacDermitt drank a lot of wine with dinner. Later, when they went into the lounge, he poured a large snifter of cognac nearly half full and drank it much too quickly. Then he poured another glass and sat down to play cribbage with Hillary. They never finished the game. After

drinking half of the second glass of cognac, MacDermid stood up abruptly and, without excusing himself, went over to a sofa to lay down. He was soon asleep. Hillary went to a cupboard, took out a light blanket, and walked over to cover him with it. She dimmed the lights in the lounge but kept the hall light on so he could easily find his way back to their cabin when he woke. The boat was swaying a little, the joints and door jambs creaking, and Hillary assumed a squall was passing over.

Later, as she put on the satin nightgown MacDermid liked so much and got into bed, she thought to herself how unusual it was for him to drink so much, but as she fell off to sleep she concluded he might merely be warding off the awkwardness of saying goodnight to her in the bed they shared for so long when in only a few short days she would be gone forever. Exhausted, Hillary drifted into a sound sleep.

She awoke suddenly, frightened by a loud noise. Sitting up, she instinctively pulled the thin coverlet over her breasts. There was another loud sound. Hillary listened to men's shouting voices, faint above her. Then she saw a light through the portal and realized it was a beam and not the first threads of dawn. Footsteps ran along the deck. She lay still. After a few minutes more of noise outside on the deck, she got out of bed, pulled on her robe, and left the cabin. The hall light was on, just as she had left it. When she entered the lounge, she noticed everything was the same, the dimmed wall sconces, MacDermid's brandy snifter on the table next to the game board with a little cognac left in it. MacDermid was not on the sofa, and the pale blue blanket she had covered him with was on the floor in the middle of the room. She heard loud noises again, this time just outside the lounge windows. Pulling her robe tightly around her waist and tying the belt, she walked out onto the deck.

There were a number of men running back and forth. They ignored her. A boat had pulled up alongside the *Lorelei* and was tied to the gunwales. Through the crossed beams of powerful lanterns Hillary did not immediately notice it was a police boat, but after a few seconds a young French police officer in a starched blue shirt stopped in front of her, bowed respectfully, and asked her to follow him. He started for the back of the yacht, ignoring the questions Hillary was shouting at him over the din.

At the stern Hillary stopped abruptly. Several flashlights were trained on the deck where the ladder rose above it. The masked heads of two divers appeared on each side of the ladder and in between its shiny tubes they lifted the upper body of Allen MacDermitt. The divers, obviously exhausted, lunged forward with it and the corpse flopped onto the wood deck, wet, bloated and lifeless. Calmly, Hillary walked over to where he lay and bent down. His eyes were closed, but that was the only normal thing about a head nearly twice its usual size. Water dripped out of his ears and nose. MacDermitt's tongue was a purplish blue and his mouth was clamped down hard on it. Hillary was struck by her lack of fear, the complete absence of horror at the sight of the grotesque, bloated body stretched out before her in the same clothes it wore when she covered it earlier that night. She glanced up and saw a man staring at her curiously. She stood and looked hard at the man's eyes.

"What happened?" she asked, nearly yelling.

"That is what I was hoping you could tell me, mademoiselle," he said calmly in French. "According to the crew, Mr. MacDermitt retired to one of the cabins with you around nine and the last anyone knew there was a cry which sounded like a cry of pain, and then a splash in the water. Two of the crew went into the sea after him, but of

course such an effort would be impossible without breathing equipment." He looked down at the dead body. "Light would help too, I suppose," he said sardonically.

Hillary looked over toward the railing on the opposite side of the deck and saw one of the stewards talking to a man in slacks and a jacket who was writing in a small notebook, and while the steward talked he glanced repeatedly at Hillary. She forced her eyes to return to MacDermitt's body stretched out beneath her, and noticed a bloodless gash on the side of his face, which presumably had been cleansed by the salt water. The policeman took her arm and led her into the lounge. It was empty and the lights had been turned up. He asked her to sit and he took a chair next to hers. He asked about her background and her relationship with MacDermitt, assuring her his questions were routine and that she shouldn't be nervous. He noticed, however, that Hillary wasn't the least bit nervous. She sat with her legs crossed under the long robe, her hands clasped in her lap while she told him about her family, her emigration to France, how and when she had met MacDermitt. She admitted they were lovers. "We shared a bed when I was here in Nice," she said.

"You did tonight?" the policeman asked.

"No, not tonight. Allen drank too much and fell asleep over there," she said, pointing to the couch on the other side of the room, "and I covered him and went to bed. I drove in from Cannes yesterday, we had a long evening, and I was tired."

"Some members of the crew said there was a . . . uh . . . strain in your relations of late."

Hillary didn't hesitate. She had guessed the crew would say something. "Actually, our relationship was quite good recently. But earlier this summer I concluded

it shouldn't go on and told Allen so. I am sure he told the crew this would be my last stay with him in Nice."

"And yet you slept in his cabin with him?"

"No, you didn't listen to me. I slept there. He did not. When I went to sleep, he was in the lounge and when I woke up, your men were pulling his body out of the water."

"Yes of course. But you intended to sleep together in his cabin last night?"

"It was assumed, yes." Hillary uncrossed her legs and stood up. "Officer, the sun will be up in a little while and I need sleep. Would it be all right if I answered your questions later today? I will not be leaving for Paris until Saturday, almost two days from now. That should give you ample opportunity to grill me."

"Grill you, mademoiselle?" The colloquialism was not familiar to him.

"Interrogate me," Hillary said in French.

"Well, mademoiselle, I would not say that it will be an interrogation, but there are many more things I need to ask you. Such as why you reacted the way you did to the sight of your lover's body pulled from the sea. Questions such as that."

"How did I react?" Hillary asked, uncertain of her situation for the first time during the interview.

"Well, mademoiselle, you didn't react at all. For all the emotion you showed it could have been a large fish lying on the deck out there." He pointed out the window, where the deck was still lit up and men were moving about. "Don't you think that strange?" he asked.

"It is such a shock."

"Yes?"

"Of course. I would not have wished Allen dead, but our relationship was over."

"Yet you planned to sleep together last night."

Hillary smiled. "Allen thought it odd also."

"Don't you?"

Hillary backed up a couple of steps and looked down at the officer, who remained seated. "We can talk about it before I leave on Saturday. All right?"

"No mademoiselle, it is not all right. I mean to say, it is perfectly acceptable to continue our discussion in my office later this morning. But I doubt very seriously that you will be leaving Nice on Saturday."

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

It had all the trappings of a trial but technically it was an inquest, much like coroners inquests in the United States. The presiding officer was a magistrate, not a judge, and most of the rules of evidence in the Napoleonic Code were ignored, thereby permitting hearsay testimony, even gossip. What made it so much like a trial was the atmosphere -- the packed room which looked like a courtroom, the crowded press section, and the table at the front of the room for Hillary and her lawyers. The law said no one was accused of a crime; the atmosphere indicated otherwise. The sensationalism surrounding the story had spread to Paris and London and, because of her American citizenship, the scandal was reported in all the American papers. As soon as UPI picked it up and sent it over the wire, I boarded a plane and headed for Nice. I was not going there to report.

Despite the distance he had to travel, Hillary's father was among the first to reach Nice. Although Gretchen's health had improved, she was in the hospital and could not tolerate a transatlantic trip, especially one arranged and executed with such haste. Randolph's attorney arranged for him to interview three French lawyers, two from Paris and one from Nice. The one from Nice was necessary because, as in America, the provincial co-counsel helped counteract the prejudices of local tribunals trying foreigners who have disturbed the local peace.

Although it was only a hearing, the proceedings lasted three days. They were the longest three days of my life. After I arrived and checked in at my hotel, I went to the local prosecutor's office to see what I could find out. Then I would go to see Hillary. An assistant prosecutor told me that the hearing would not begin for several days and I

asked him if that was because Hillary's lawyers had requested a delay. No, he said, it was because certain witnesses from London and Paris had to have time to travel to Nice and be interviewed by the authorities. When I suggested the delay also had the effect of fanning the publicity, both locally and abroad, the man stopped cooperating and showed me the door.

After the accident, Hillary did not stay on the yacht and didn't go back to MacDermitt's house. At first she thought that staying on his property would signal that she could not possibly have had any involvement in the drowning, but from comments she overheard on the yacht, and later at the house, she realized it would only be perceived as a display of bad taste. She did not, however, slink off to some remote hideaway or stay at the home of friends. She checked into the Negresco and occupied its largest and most expensive suite. Although prominent and symbolic, this residence was nonetheless private and unreachable. Even by me. When I asked for her room number at the front desk, and the assistant manager called on the house phone to inquire, he nodded twice as he listened, put the instrument down, and told me sympathetically that Mademoiselle Malone sent me her fond wishes but did not wish to be disturbed. When the next day I was told the same thing, I decided to read newspapers in the lobby and see if anyone else was allowed up to the Malone suite. I no sooner sat down in a comfortable leather chair off to one side with an unobstructed view of the front desk, when a couple entered, walked up and talked to the assistant manager, and was escorted by one of the bellboys to an elevator. I found out later it was Maria and Gene Jolas.

They were not with Hillary very long. About half an hour later they got off the

elevator and rushed out. The woman was crying and the man had his arm around her shoulders to comfort her. I considered running after them but decided to leave them alone. After a few more people, probably my colleagues in the fourth estate, were turned away at the desk, I gave up and returned to my hotel. On the third day, which was the day before the hearing was to begin in the dilapidated old courthouse near the center of town that I had visited during my frustrating wait to see Hillary, I was unexpectedly informed by the desk clerk that I could go up to her suite. Since he had not called on the telephone, I assumed Hillary must have left word that morning that I was finally welcome to see her.

Hillary's father was with her when I walked into the spacious and bright living room. Hillary introduced her father and we shook hands, Randolph looking unjustifiably sternly at me. I went over to kiss her on the cheek. She returned the kiss, and as I stood I looked hard at her face. She was not really less beautiful, but the high cheekbones were more pronounced and the eyes appeared to have receded a bit into her head. When I took in the rest of her as I sat on a chair close by, I could see why she looked gaunt; she had lost weight. There was no sign of crying or sleeplessness in her eyes, but there was no life in them either. The eyes which had captivated me and so many others were like bright lights gone out. They were gray and dull.

Hillary asked if I wanted a drink or a cup of coffee. I told her no. "Are you here . . . professionally?" she asked quietly.

"No, of course not." My tone was that of a man who had been insulted and that was fine with me. "I came here to give you any help I can," I told her. She spoke my name. "Yes?" I said.

"You won't believe me, but I don't need any help." She turned to Randolph. "Father tells me how good these expensive lawyers are. They've made a lot of inquiries and asked me a lot of questions, and you know what they told me?" I shook my head. "They told me just to say what happened. That if I just say what happened I'll be all right." Hillary coughed a deep, throaty cough. "I told them that Maria had been summoned to give her testimony and after the court heard her . . ."

"It isn't a court, Hillary," her father interrupted.

"Yes, father, of course." She smiled at him, as one smiles tolerantly to someone who insists on correcting insignificant errors. "After the magistrate hears what Maria has told me she will say, all these lawyers will have a real problem." Her hands fell to her lap and she sighed.

"What will Maria say?" I asked.

"Things I told her about Allen and me."

"Which were?" I asked. Hillary's father rose and walked to the window behind her chair, looked out at the Boulevard for a moment, and turned back to the room. He pointed a finger at me.

"I would be very grateful if you would talk her into telling us just what she told the Jolas woman. It seems I'm going to hear it from her in court. . . ." He caught himself. ". . . in the hearing, and can't understand why I can't hear it from my own daughter."

"Father?" Hillary's weakness, and the dull quality of her voice, were appalling. He looked at her. "I told the lawyers. I can't tell you about it. I can't!" She put her face in her hands and started to cry. Randolph and I looked at each other with the same helplessness and I stood, thinking it might calm her if I left. Aware of my movement,

Hillary looked up and asked me to sit down again. "Father, you don't know this man. He is a good friend. Look at him and tell me if you trust him."

"But Hillary," Randolph sputtered, "this is ridiculous! What difference does it make if I trust him?"

Hillary ignored the question. "I'm going to propose something to you and before I do, I need to know if you feel you can trust him." I sat and stared at her.

"All right, I trust him." Randolph stuck his head forward, defiance embroidering his capitulation.

"I will tell him what happened. Alone, here, now. He will meet you in the lobby in a little while. If he believes you should have to hear it twice, he'll send you back up here. But if he doesn't, you'll go back to your room and wait for the hearing." She sighed deeply again. "Agreed?"

Randolph shot me a look I didn't deserve. I didn't much like the position in which she was putting me, but I would have done anything for her even if it risked precluding a relationship with her father. "Agreed," he said stiffly and walked over to her, bent down to kiss her, and left the room.

I remember an expression I once heard or read, about a man who was told a painful story. At its conclusion he observed that "the angels wept." That was how I felt an hour later when I took the elevator to the lobby of the Negresco, saw Randolph Malone in a large comfortable chair reading the financial section of the *Tribune*, and approached him. He put the paper down but did not get up. He looked hard at my eyes, which were still red from crying.

"Mr. Malone, I'm sorry."

"For God's sake, are you trying to tell me . . ."

"What I'm telling you," I said with unaccustomed vehemence, "is that for some reason Hillary placed on me the responsibility for deciding the amount of pain you will endure and my decision is that you'll hear her story just once." I sat down on the chair opposite his. "She didn't say so but I think it is more than simply wanting to spare you pain, Mr. Malone. I believe Hillary suspects that if you hear what she just told me before the hearing you may try to interfere with her testimony, that you won't want her to tell what happened in a packed courtroom full of reporters. I may be wrong."

"What could be so horrible? Can you tell me that?"

"I can tell you that what MacDermitt did to Hillary fulfills every father's worst nightmare about what can happen to a daughter."

At that moment the strong edifice maintained by Randolph Malone for so long fell apart. He put his head in his hands and sat like that for a long while, and when I thought he must have been crying, he lifted his head and looked at me with red but dry eyes and an expression of helplessness I would not have thought possible on his face. "I accept your decision but I want to know how bad it will be. I want to call my wife's doctor and make sure she's not given access to newspapers. Can you give me a general sense of what happened?"

I thought a moment. "Yes, I think so. Hillary was hurt physically, both in traditional ways and as a result of the most deviant sexual behavior imaginable."

"My God." Malone set his jaw and stared past me at something in the distance. "My God," he repeated. He was silent again and when I was certain he had no more questions for me, I got up and left. As I turned the corner toward the front entrance, I

looked back and saw him sitting in the same position.

I sat through the first day of the hearing without understanding much of what was going on. Hillary, her father, and her lawyers were not present that day and so the magistrate did not have the official translator provide an English language translation of the testimony of the French police, coroner, MacDermitt's staff, and assorted other witnesses. I learned later that Hillary's lawyers believed her presence during the recitation of grisly physical evidence would only cause everyone, including the magistrate, to look at her and wonder if she were capable of murdering a man, whereas her absence would suggest that she was merely another witness in a case involving the unfortunate, accidental death of a famous man. What little I was able to understand suggested that their strategy was only partially successful. Several times during the morning and early afternoon everyone looked at the table reserved for Hillary and her lawyers as though the absent witness was suspected of being more than merely absent.

The Malone party was present for the second day of testimony and the bilingual clerk told me that Maria Jolas was the only scheduled witness. The air was stuffy in the courtroom that morning and the crowd larger. I was in the second row, on the aisle, and when Gene and Maria walked into the chamber the spectators began whispering to one another, glancing expectantly at Maria. I wondered what rumor had circulated that would put her in the spotlight. The clerk asked everyone to stand, and the magistrate, a kindly looking man in his early sixties with a full head of slightly graying hair, walked in, sat down and asked everyone to take their seats. He repeated the speech he had given the day before, this time translated roughly a paragraph at a time, about how the proceeding was not a trial, that no one was accused of wrongdoing, and that his sole

purpose was to determine how Allen MacDermitt died and, if by human intervention, whether there was good cause to believe a particular individual bore responsibility for it. He then turned to the hearing examiner, told him in a stern voice not to forget the purpose of the hearing, and admonished him to avoid the sensational. Apparently, the magistrate had received a preview of Maria's testimony and knew what was coming. Maria was called to the witness box and I saw Gene squeeze her hand as she got up from her seat in the row in front of me.

After asking her name, nationality, place of residence, and marital status, the examiner asked if she had known Allen MacDermitt and, if so, how she met him. In a very quiet and unsteady voice, Maria haltingly told him that she and her husband met MacDermitt a few times at social functions but really did not know him until a friend of theirs started seeing him.

"That would be Miss Malone?" the examiner asked, introducing Hillary's name into the proceedings for the first time since the day before, when MacDermitt's servants and employees described his intimate relations with her.

"Yes, Hillary started seeing Allen and we saw more of him after that."

"Would you say that you and your husband became friends of Mr. MacDermitt?"

"No, I wouldn't say that."

"Why not?" the man asked.

"Well, Gene and I . . . my husband and I . . . were very close to Hillary and really viewed Allen as one does the friend of a friend."

The examiner hesitated and apparently decided not to challenge this. "Did you like Mr. MacDermitt?" he asked. One of Hillary's lawyers stood, about to say something,

but the magistrate showed him a palm and turned to the examiner.

"I believe, Mr. Deauville, that Mrs. Jolas' like or dislike of the deceased is not relevant."

"Sir, I suggest it is," the examiner responded. "Whatever feelings Mrs. Jolas had for the deceased were certainly acquired in part through her conversations with Miss Malone and could reflect Miss Malone's state of mind." The magistrate nodded at the examiner, thought for a moment, and told him to proceed. Mr. Deauville turned to Maria and repeated the question.

"No, I did not like Mr. MacDermitt," Maria said, her voice stronger, less tentative.

"Why not?" the examiner asked.

"Well, I should rephrase that," Maria said. "I liked Allen at first. So did my husband. But I came to dislike him intensely because of the way he treated Hillary."

"How did he treat her?" the examiner asked. His voice was low and I could tell by his tone, and the way he stood perfectly still, that he was at a crucial stage of his interrogation.

"He was physically cruel to her."

"How do you know that, Mrs. Jolas?"

"Hillary returned to Paris with him last year and came to our apartment. Her face was swollen, her lip was cut, and she had a blackened eye." I noticed Hillary's father looking at Maria with the same helpless look he showed me in the lobby of the Negresco. She did not return his look. "I asked her, of course, what had happened to her, who had done that to her," Maria continued. "She told me Allen had beaten and raped her."

The translator repeated the words in French and the crowd erupted, the man to my right whispering excitedly to the heavy woman sitting next to him. The magistrate had no gavel but he raised both hands to order silence and the conversations throughout the room subsided to a murmur. Mr. Deauville walked up closer to the witness box and asked Maria if Miss Malone had told her that.

"Yes, very reluctantly."

"Why do you say 'reluctantly'?" he asked.

"She was amazing." For the first time during her testimony Maria looked over at Hillary. "She actually suggested she may have brought on his attack by not being intimate with him for several days. I was at a loss for words. I cried. We both cried."

"Wasn't Miss Malone living with Mr. MacDermitt at his house in Nice when this supposed rape occurred? Were they not sharing a bed?"

"I believe so," Maria said slowly.

"Assuming he struck Miss Malone in such a way as to cause the facial injuries you saw, do you actually believe Miss Malone could have been raped by her lover?"

The Nice lawyer rose and told the magistrate that no one was on trial for the crime of rape, that Miss Malone's supposed implied consent was not at issue, and that in any event Mrs. Jolas' opinion would be pure conjecture. The magistrate agreed and told the examiner to move on.

"Now Mrs. Jolas, you have described your shocking visit from Miss Malone during which she told you Mr. MacDermitt beat and raped her. Did you and your husband, a short while later, visit Mr. MacDermitt's house and stay there as his guest for nearly a week?"

From the look on Maria Jolas' face the full weight of her implicit forgiveness or, worse, her doubt about the credibility of Hillary's story about MacDermitt's attack, struck her severely. She literally seemed to shrink in the witness box. She started to cry and the magistrate asked the clerk to bring her a glass of water and asked Maria if she would like to take a short break. She told him no, she wished to finish her testimony as soon as possible. "Yes," she told the examiner, her voice stronger. "Gene and I were very concerned about her. We had promised to spend a week with her. Since she was Allen's house guest it was unavoidable to spend that week in his house. But both of us considered ourselves Hillary's guests, not his."

"But you were there. You dined with him, enjoyed his amenities, conversed with him, did you not?"

"Yes, but . . ."

"But what, Mrs. Jolas? Have I misstated what occurred during your visit after your friend Miss Malone was beaten and raped by your host?" The examiner's tone was nasty. But suddenly it changed. Without waiting for her to answer he waved away his own question and asked another. It occurred to me later that evening that he was about to impeach his own witness, for if the credibility of Hillary's account to Maria of what MacDermitt had done to her was somehow destroyed, so too would be Hillary's motive for killing the man. "Mrs. Jolas," the examiner continued, "did you believe Miss Malone's account of what happened to her, yet despite crediting her story, did you visit Mr. MacDermitt's house in Nice to see your friend and to make sure it hadn't happened again?"

Maria could not have seen what the examiner's change of direction really meant

and was visibly relieved that she was not being accused of disbelieving Hillary. She did not understand that believing Hillary might help doom her. "Yes. Yes, of course," she said eagerly. "We visited her because we promised we would and felt she needed people there who truly loved her. And I guess we also wanted to make sure she was all right. As you said."

"So you credited Miss Malone's explanations of her bruised face and cut lip? You believed Allen MacDermitt beat and raped your friend?" The examiner walked back to his desk and sat down, a gesture which appeared to leave Maria completely alone in the center of the courtroom to heighten the gravity of her answer.

"Yes, of course I believed her." Maria looked over at Hillary and smiled. "Hillary is a kind and beautiful woman who was treated in a vile way by that man."

The magistrate looked up at the examiner and asked if he had any more questions. The examiner shook his head. He sat straight with his arms folded, content. The magistrate asked Hillary's local lawyer if he had any questions for the witness, and after a whispered conversation with his colleagues from Paris, he stood and said that Mrs. Jolas had endured enough. Maria left the witness box, walked over to the table where Hillary sat, and bent down to kiss her cheek. Hillary accepted the kiss and looked up at Maria with glassy eyes, the kind that want to cry but can't. She squeezed Maria's hand. The room was still.

The magistrate looked at his pocket watch. "Mr. Deauville, do you wish to call Miss Malone?"

The examiner glanced at the clock on the wall. It was after two. He rose. "I think, sir, it would be best to adjourn and reconvene in the morning. I will then call my

last witness, Hillary Malone.”

The magistrate nodded, stood up, waited for the clerk to ask everyone to rise, and walked out of the room. I glanced at Hillary and she glanced back at me. Her look told me she was ready.

The last day of the hearing plays over and over in my mind with a surreal quality I have never been able to reconstruct as a visually coherent sequence. My recollection always starts at the end, the moment Hillary stood, her eyes rolling upward into her head, and screamed out that she had done nothing wrong and shouldn't be punished for wanting to leave a beast's lair with dignity and respect, whereupon she collapsed, hit her head on the edge of the witness box on her way down, and lay in a sitting position in the enclosure with her back to the room. Randolph was at her side first, pulling her into his arms, and the Jolas' immediately ran up to see what they could do. I sat and stared at her lying there unconscious with strands of her auburn hair protruding from between the slats in the witness box.

"Why did you return to Mr. MacDermitt's house after being assaulted by him?" the examiner asked, his voice cold and determined.

"I felt responsible in many ways," she said hesitantly. "Allen needed a lot of nurturing and I had abandoned him in his own home. I don't know why, exactly, except that all my friends seemed to have gone away. At least that's how it felt, and I was lonely and depressed."

"Mrs. Jolas said you were raped. Were you?"

"He forced himself into me when I didn't want him to, if that is rape."

"Could he perhaps have been merely passionate?" the examiner asked, turning

away from her and looking out to the crowded room.

"There was no passion, just unwelcome and unwanted sex."

"Did Mr. MacDermitt ever hurt you again after that?" the examiner asked.

Hillary looked at her father and I saw a singular tear roll down her cheek and stop, the only paeon to the pain she felt. "Yes," she said quietly.

"Please tell us about it," the examiner said, glancing through some papers in his hand as though the answer was routine and not critical in the case he so clearly was trying to make against her.

Hillary began slowly, chronologically describing in detail the musings MacDermitt shared with her about the nature of sexuality, pleasure, and pain, about the beginnings that were innocuous enough, tying her to the bedposts so that her outstretched limbs formed a kind of crucifix from which vantage point he would enter her, about how he later would stroke her buttocks with his hand while thrashing her back and thighs with what she thought was a buggy whip, and when her flesh was tingling with pain enter her anus after slathering it with some creme he had ready, how it hurt her but was tolerable. As she talked I noticed more and more heads of the spectators lowering, staring at their hands in their laps, embarrassed to look up at the beautiful young woman as she described abasement that was impossible to imagine anyone tolerating. When Hillary described the three nights of vaginal-anal intercourse, ending with the wine bottle with which MacDermitt tore her insides while completing his pleasure, I watched Randolph Malone put his head down on the desk. I thought he might have had a heart attack but the muffled cries of several of the spectators, especially the women, were punctuated at that moment by the plaintive cry of a woman at the back of the room

and, hearing it, Randolph's head lifted. I saw a face I hoped never to see again as long as I lived. Randolph Malone wanted to die. It was in his eyes as he glanced toward the back of the room to find the source of the cry.

Shortly after the vivid description of her ordeal with MacDermitt, Hillary told about her desire to end things in a way that would give both her and MacDermitt dignity, and about his gratitude for this. When she got to the point of waking to the sound of running feet on deck, of leaving her bed to inquire, and of seeing MacDermitt's bloated body heaved upon the deck near her feet, she stood up suddenly, screamed out, and collapsed.

I met Maria and Gene Jolas at the hospital the next day. I never saw them again after that, although Maria and I talked many times by telephone. They were in Hillary's room when I walked in with a small flower arrangement and a copy of *The Beautiful and the Damned*. In one of her letters Hillary said she had never read it although Fitzgerald told her he thought she should. She was sitting up in bed and gave me a firm, heartfelt embrace as I leaned over to kiss her. After introducing Gene and Maria, she asked how long I planned to stay and I told her I would stay until she was out of the hospital. Maria and Gene took two chairs over by the window, not wanting to leave Hillary, yet not wanting to encroach on our privacy. I sat on the edge of the hospital bed and handed her the book. She took it and smiled up at me, but as suddenly as the smile appeared, it vanished.

"Father is beside himself," she said. "He told me he would visit only when he had news for me."

For a moment I didn't understand what she meant. I couldn't believe Randolph

Malone had heard of the magistrate's report and took so long to get to the hospital to tell Hillary about it. "Didn't you hear?" I asked her.

"Hear what?" she asked me. The Jolas' stood up and came over to the other side of the bed.

"Hillary, the magistrate's decision came about two hours ago."

"And?" she asked, leaning toward me.

"Accidental death by drowning."

Hillary closed her eyes and ignored Gene Jolas' exclamation of victory and his wife's tears. She lay back on the pillow, her mouth neither smiling nor frowning, and closed her eyes. There was no joy, no relief on her face. I stood and accepted Gene Jolas' handshake and pat on the back. His relief was palpable. Maria walked over to the side of the bed where I had been sitting and took Hillary's hand. "I'm sorry Hill, I'm so sorry." She started to cry. "I almost ruined things."

Hillary opened her eyes. "No, Maria, what you said in that place was only a prelude to what I said. They believed you." She squeezed Maria's hand. "They believed me."

Maria showed me the letters Hillary had received before the hearing began and several telegrams that had been sent the night before. All the friends Hillary thought had abandoned her communicated their affection and hopes. Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Stein, Picasso, McAlmon, Ford, even Hadley, sent word to her. I looked through the pile, smiling and pointing out particular letters and telegrams I was sure must have pleased her. She didn't smile, didn't share my enthusiasm, or the Jolas', for this outpouring of sentiment. She waited until I was through blathering about what I

assumed would be her happiest moment in a long time and closed her eyes again. "But you came and they didn't," she said quietly.

Outside on the street I looked left and right for a taxi. Maria Jolas walked up to me and held out her hand. I took it. "She'll be all right," she said. "Gene and I are going to take her back to Paris, get her involved again, help her forget this."

Standing there, thinking only of the way Hillary looked when I said goodbye a few minutes before, I smiled down at Maria and shook my head. "Good luck Maria. You'll need it."

"Why?" she asked, frowning.

"Because Hillary is an empty vessel." I let go of her hand, walked between two parked cars and got into the taxi that had stopped. As it pulled into the late morning traffic I looked through the back window and saw Maria Jolas still standing at the curb with her arm outstretched.

Part III

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

It took Hillary Malone ten years to learn that Ernest Hemingway could not sustain a lasting relationship with any man or woman. Although this did little to assuage her hurt and disappointment that he seldom wrote and never visited, she did finally understand that his nature precluded what she most wanted from him. She was not alone. In 1939 Hemingway and Dos Passos were estranged, their relationship severed by bickering over a movie project they planned about the Spanish civil war. Fitzgerald too had his fill of Hemingway's insensitivity, finally writing to him that he could not abide the use of his name in Hemingway's story, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*. During their falling out, and later when Zelda was hospitalized, Fitzgerald corresponded with Hillary fairly regularly and visited her twice in Paris and once in Annecy. Dos Passos also made an effort to keep in touch, although his literary career and family life made his communiqués less and less frequent.

Hillary was happy in Annecy. She moved to the lakeside town in the mountains of northeastern France in 1931. Her first year there she rented a large apartment on the waterway which coursed through the center of the small town. At the far end of her living room a large window looked out on the canal and the pastel three story buildings on the other side of the footbridge. She painted that scene many times. After a year, however, she yearned for more solitude and began searching for the first time in her life for a truly permanent home. One day, the elderly woman who rented the rear apartment on the second floor of her building said that a friend of hers had died and the executor of the estate was selling her house. It was small, she said, but stood on a large lakefront property directly opposite the town, accessible by a narrow and winding

road which ended at the property line. Hillary asked the woman to talk to the lawyer handling the dead woman's affairs. The lawyer's name was Jean Dubois. Three days later she went with him to see the property. They drove along the eastern edge of Lake Annecy, past the park, past the last cluster of houses, and for another three miles. The road narrowed until it became a single, gravel lane which ended abruptly at a gate. Dubois got out and opened it and they drove into a dense forest. Not far from the gate the narrow lane veered to the left and Hillary saw the house through the trees.

She loved it immediately. When they got out of the car, Dubois opened the front door, handed her the keys, and said she should feel free to look around. He wanted to check on some things outside the house.

From the small vestibule Hillary could see the view. As she walked down the narrow hall and into the main room at the back of the house her smile widened, and when she reached the double glass doors which opened onto a flagstone terrace she felt like laughing out loud. She could not believe the first place she looked at was so perfect for her. The room in which she stood was large. Three walls were made up almost entirely of large windows overlooking the lake and woods; the wall to the rear was gray stone with a large fireplace in the middle. To look into the room from where Hillary stood made it seem like a cozy country house, but to look out through the windows made her feel as though she was outside. From the front, the house appeared to stand in a dense wood, but on the lake side there was an expansive, well-kept lawn which sloped down from the terrace to the water's edge. The gunmetal gray water glistened in the late morning sunshine, contrasting sharply with the deep green of the grass.

When Dubois came into the house, Hillary was upstairs looking at the three bedrooms and, hearing him below, she descended the narrow stairs and tried to look judicious. Dubois asked her if she liked it and she nodded.

"I am happy you do. Frankly, mademoiselle, I have not had much interest in the place, although the owner died only ten days ago." Hillary asked him how much he was asking for it. "Oh, I have not given that any thought mademoiselle. I assumed it would be auctioned, along with the rest of her possessions, and so I never considered a price."

Hillary told him she would pay fifty thousand francs for it. "My dear woman, I doubt it is worth that much!" the old lawyer exclaimed.

"I don't want to buy it at auction," Hillary said. "I'll pay to avoid that."

The man looked at her and shook his head. "What about the furnishings?" he asked.

"You must include those. Some I'll keep and some I'll replace with my own things."

Dubois shook his head again and told Hillary to come to his office at the end of the week, by which time he would have the papers drawn up. Hillary walked over to the terrace doors and took one last look at the lake, noticing for the first time a small dock jutting out from the shoreline. There was no boat. She rejoined Dubois. He held the door for her, locked it behind them, and told Hillary he wanted to show her some other features of the property before they left. The flagstone walk circled around to the left and on both sides of it Hillary noticed flower beds long dormant and grown over with weeds. She surmised that the dead woman hired someone to take care of the lawn in back but had taken care of the front gardens herself until the infirmities of old age

prevented her from getting outside in spring to plant and weed. On the far side of the house, Dubois showed Hillary an old garage, a freestanding structure filled with garden tools, a small tractor, and hundreds of clay pots. Below the only window, Hillary noticed a potting bench cluttered with junk. They left the garage. The path circled around it and led to a fenced clearing. Under a tree in the distance stood a dark brown horse, its head down eating grass.

"How lovely," Hillary said, resting her arm on the fence. "Whose horse?" she asked Dubois.

"Why, I guess it's a 'furnishing'."

"I beg your pardon?" Hillary asked.

"A small joke, mademoiselle. The pasture is part of the property and the horse too. So I guess it is now your horse."

"And one of your outside chores when we arrived . . ."

"To feed the horse, yes." The lawyer smiled. "It is a nuisance, every day coming out here just to feed a horse. But I suppose it will be not be so difficult for you." He smiled, then frowned. "Of course I could sell the horse."

"No. I want to keep it. What is his name?"

"It is a 'she'," Dubois said. "But I do not know her name. I could find out. There must be records."

"No, don't do that," Hillary said. "I'll name her myself."

Dubois continued the tour, showing Hillary a small milk house now used to store feed for the horse and other miscellany. Past the milk house, the path opened onto the lawn approximately halfway between the house and the lake, and they walked on the

soft grass up to the house, around to the left, and onto the gravel drive where Dubois had parked his automobile. Hillary was convinced she was not paying too much. The view alone was worth the money she agreed to pay.

Dubois was efficient and timely, and when Hillary visited his office the day before she was to sign papers, merely to ask a question, he told her everything was ready and she could do it then. She left two hours later with keys, a copy of the deed, and an inventory of the personal property in and around the house. She already had arranged for some men to come and move her things from the apartment on Saturday, and she called the company they worked for and asked if they could do it the next day instead. She was told they could. That Saturday night at eleven she sat, exhausted, in an overstuffed chair in front of one of the windows in the room she loved, poured a glass of cognac, and looked out at the lights on the western shore of Lake Annecy. She was home and she was happy.

Suddenly she began to cry. She didn't try to stop. Letting her head fall back against the chair, she simply let the tears flow until there were no more, got up, washed and put away her glass, and went upstairs to bed. She was lonely but wanted companionship from no one other than people no longer able to provide it to her. Lying awake for nearly an hour, Hillary thought about the context of her life there. She knew she was talked about in town. People were confused by her reclusiveness and her disinterest in the many men who had tried to make her acquaintance. Her reputation as a beautiful woman who had no interest in relationships with men finally prevented all but an occasional effort to pierce her shell. She had not been with a man in three years.

The nine year stay in Annecy was Hillary's most prolific writing period. I know

that she began to write poetry again, by something she told me during our night alone together, but there are no poems to prove it. She wrote many letters though. Fully forty of the letters she wrote to me were written between 1931 and 1940. She painted, she wrote to her family and friends, and she became a talented equestrian. She named her horse Babette, after the child of one of her neighbors in Paris. Babette turned out to be a young filly and not an old mare, as Dubois presumed.

During the whole time Hillary lived in Annecy, she had only one relationship with a man, which lasted eighteen months, from March 1935 to August 1936. Gerard Lyon was in his early forties when they met. It was almost a year after his young wife died during childbirth. The baby also died. Gerard had many horses on his property south of Annecy and, although he was not a trained veterinarian, many people asked for his help when they had sick horses. When Babette began coughing and spending an inordinate amount of time lying down in the pasture as far away from the gate as possible, refusing to come to the sound of her name, Hillary became worried and asked Dubois what she should do.

The old lawyer had become a friend. He drove out to Hillary's house regularly to have a glass of sherry with her and always looked around the property to see if she needed anything. When he came the next day to look around and have a drink with her, Hillary asked him about Babette and he recommended Gerard and volunteered to contact the man to see if he could look at the horse. Only four hours later, Hillary heard an automobile on the gravel drive and walked around the house from the terrace, where she was working on a picture, to see who it was.

Dubois greeted her with his usual, formal warmth, kissing her lightly on the cheek

and accepting her hug as if it embarrassed him. He turned to Gerard and introduced Hillary. Gerard had sandy hair with no visible gray in it. He was rugged looking but Hillary noticed his face had finely chiseled features which seemed out of place on his large and muscular body. Not interested in small talk, he responded to Hillary's thanks for taking the time to come over by asking her brusquely where her horse was. Dubois led the way along the path around the house and past the garage to the small clearing where the gate opened onto the pasture. It was closed but not latched. Babette was standing now, but did not trot over to greet them. Gerard opened the gate, walked briskly, and approached the horse with his hands in his pockets. Babette brayed and danced sideways away from him. Taking a thin rope out of his jacket, Gerard approached her, put the rope around her neck, and led her over to a shady spot near the fence, where he forced her down, first to her front knees and then onto her side. His examination did not take long. He stood up. Babette also got to her feet, pawed the ground twice with a hoof, and ran off to the side of the pasture which faced the lake. Gerard walked back to Hillary and Dubois.

"Do you know what's the matter with her?" Hillary asked.

"Yes. She has a cold. Her nose is running and she has a slight fever. I have some things in the car you can give her, some pills, some liniment. She'll be fine in a few days. One of her shoes is cracked and she's out of shape," he said accusingly.

"But I ride her nearly every day."

"She needs to exercise every day for at least an hour. I'll replace that shoe before I go." Gerard was not rude, just businesslike. Hillary took him to the milk house where they found a pine box with extra horseshoes and a bag of nails. Dubois found a

hammer. "If you and Dubois want to go to the house, I shouldn't be long," he said.

"No, I want to watch. I need to know how to do it myself."

"Suit yourself," Gerard told her, and started off for the pasture. He bent over with his back to Babette, pulled her leg up between his knees, and removed the old shoe. He explained to Hillary how painful it could be if the shoe actually broke, and showed her how to nail in the new one. When he was finished, Babette got up quickly and ran off.

Hillary thanked Gerard and they walked back to Dubois, who was waiting at the gate. All three of them walked back to the house and Hillary invited the men in for a glass of wine, but Gerard looked at his watch and said he had to go. He got the liniment and a jar of pills out of Dubois' automobile and gave Hillary instructions for wiping down Babette and giving her the pills.

Hillary stood at the open window of the lawyer's car looking down at Gerard. "Now that you know the way here, perhaps you'll come again," she said. She had not flirted with a man in a long time and she felt foolish. Hillary noticed Dubois smiling behind the wheel, staring straight ahead through the windshield. "Are you married?" she asked.

Gerard looked up at her. "Married? No, no more. My wife and daughter died a year ago." Hillary said nothing. Gerard stuck his arm out the window and took Hillary's hand. His was powerful but the skin was smoother than she would have thought. "I'll come back late tomorrow morning to check on her," Gerard said, "and then I'll have that drink." The lawyer backed up and drove down the path to the road.

Gerard visited Hillary every day until, a week later, he pronounced Babette well.

After that he came only when he was invited. He never asked Hillary to visit his farm, nor did he ever ask her to have dinner with him in Annecy, or to accompany him to the theatre, or a concert or the cinema. He only saw her at her home, and then only when she called him and asked him to come to her. Gerard liked the way she rode Babette, and he seemed to genuinely appreciate her paintings. They talked for hours about things and ideas, never about people or places. Hillary speculated that Gerard had few friends and had never traveled far from his home. She found his mind unusually broad and open in some respects and peculiarly narrow in others. After two weeks, they slept together for the first time. For such a powerful man he was unusually tender. Hillary's release came quickly, a moment before his. Confusing her shudder with frustration, he began to remonstrate but Hillary cupped her hand over his mouth and told him he had pleased her. They slept in each other's arms until sunset, when Gerard awoke and began dressing on the other side of the dark room. Hearing Hillary stir, he walked over and sat on the edge of the bed.

"You have made me very happy," he said, but his voice was sad, or perhaps apprehensive.

"Mmmm," Hillary murmured, and rolled from her side onto her back, reaching in the dark for his hand. "Must you go?"

"Yes. There is no one there to take care of things after three o'clock and it is long past three."

"Can you come back tomorrow?" she asked.

"No, not tomorrow, but the next day perhaps." Silence. "If you would like me to." He stood at the exact moment she reached for his hand again, and hers fell to the

bedclothes. The missed hands were emblematic of the experience she would have over and over again with Gerard. He came to her when she called him but then left her when she most wanted him to stay. After twelve months, Hillary began to understand that her solitude had not ended. It was merely being shared with another solitary soul. As happy as he made her feel, and as much as she loved their time together, the relationship eventually reached a point at which it had to evolve or become nothing more than embittered absences between moments together.

In the late summer of 1936, a month after Babette died after breaking a leg trying to jump the fence when spooked by an animal that had gotten into the pasture, Hillary escorted Gerard to the door one night after they lay in bed together and talked for nearly four hours without making love. His kiss told her, just as the way the squeeze of her hand told him, that they would never be together again.

Hillary was not entirely abandoned by the lost generation. It isn't clear exactly when Scott Fitzgerald visited her in Annecy. Several of Hillary's letters refer to his coming to see her but all of them, written between 1938 and 1940, speak of the event as if it were in the distant past. He apparently expressed mortification over his absence during her time of great need and wanted to talk about it. Hillary did not. Fitzgerald wanted intimacy from Hillary.

"I was once a man for you," he said. They were sitting in her small kitchen with coffee and cognac.

"No, Scott. It will not happen again."

He had driven down from Geneva. "My auto is in terrible shape, Hillary. Just terrible. I'm afraid to drive back over those mountains with the brakes the way they

are.”

“All right, Scott. Spend the night here. I’ll call a mechanic in the morning to come out and have a look at it.”

The next morning, Hillary brought Fitzgerald a second cup of coffee where he sat at her breakfast table. “I’ll call into town and see about that mechanic I promised you.”

“I think I’ll be fine, girl. Really.” He wiped his lips with his napkin and smiled at her. “I should be on my way. If things begin to look bad with the auto, I promise I’ll stop somewhere and have it checked out.”

Surmising he had only wanted to take advantage of her loneliness and their old relationship, Hillary was depressed for several weeks after Fitzgerald's visit. The letters he wrote to her afterward, she said in a note to me, were much better than those which preceded it. It was almost as if, she wrote to me, he had posterity in mind.

Annecy was not seriously threatened by the Germans at the beginning of the war. Immediately after moving across the border into France, the Reich sent a small contingent there only because the town was one gateway to the rue Napoleon which led south to Aix en Provence and the critical port at Marseille. Marseille was a nuisance for the Germans since it was the embarkation point for contraband and political enemies who wanted to get to Spain, Portugal, and North Africa. I knew Hillary Malone was not safe in France. Randolph was active in the effort to involve America in the war in Europe. He was also a wealthy man whose daughter could be useful to the Germans if America did enter the conflict. Getting to Annecy would be far easier than convincing Hillary to leave it. I estimated I would arrive at just about the time she turned forty and beat my estimate by three days. I soon discovered that my press credentials were a

two-edged sword. They permitted me to get off the train from neutral Switzerland, get past the security check, and go on my way unmolested, but my citizenship and occupation made it certain I would be followed and contacted regularly.

On the trip to Geneva, and during the train trip from Geneva to Annecy, I planned what I would say to her. Since she knew her father and I talked occasionally, I could attribute just about anything to Randolph. I knew Gretchen was still quite ill, but Gretchen had been sick most of the past ten years and her condition had not moved Hillary to revisit America. Danger would not motivate Hillary to leave Annecy; it might well have the opposite effect. Also, I doubted she was afraid to die. Aware that Picasso and Matisse had been invited to the United States and that Picasso had refused, I tried to concoct a story about him that would entice Hillary to return to Paris with me before it was occupied. The Germans had just crossed the Maginot line and it was assumed that Paris would fall within months, perhaps weeks. I doubted that Hillary had had any contact with Picasso during her Annecy years anyway and I couldn't come up with anything credible. The only other man whose need could draw Hillary out of her refuge was Hemingway but I was certain he corresponded with her regularly from his home La Finca Vigia, in Havana, where he was completing *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. I had no way of knowing my assumption was erroneous and that Hemingway had closed the Hillary Malone chapter in his life along with so many others. By the time I arrived in Annecy and hired a car, obtained directions to Hillary's house, and set out around the lake, I was no closer to an argument that would compel Hillary to leave France.

She was having lunch alone on the terrace when I pulled up in front of the house. She didn't hear the sound of my tires on the gravel and, not wanting to frighten her, I

called out when I was halfway around the right side of the house. She had described the house in such detail in her letters I knew exactly where I was going and knew as well where she was likely to be. When I reached the terrace she was standing at the table holding a napkin. She folded it and put it down before walking over to welcome me. From a distance, the eleven years since I last saw her might as well have been eleven months, but as she came closer I noticed subtle differences in her appearance. Her figure, still hourglass perfection, was slightly fuller, especially through the waist, and her dark auburn hair, much shorter than before, had hints of gray in it. When she was directly in front of me, squinting in the bright early June sunlight, I noticed tiny wrinkles at the corners of her eyes and mouth. Otherwise she was no different, no less beautiful, no less heartbreakingly desirable.

"You should have warned me you were coming," she said after kissing me warmly. "I have more fish stew. It's mostly perch, but it is good." I told her I ate a late breakfast on the train. "I'm surprised one can get service on the train these days." She obviously was well aware of the rising chaos around her, and I explained that only the trains going into Switzerland were bedlam. No one wanted to go the other way, into France. "I suppose not. Come and sit with me. Can you stay a few days?" I sat while Hillary went into the house to get wine. She had described the view perfectly and I agreed with the observation in her letters that words could not do justice to the rich ribbons of color -- blue sky, green trees, blue-gray water, green grass sloping up to where I sat. Hillary came out with a bottle and another glass. I told her about my trip and she looked out at the lake and smiled. Never having felt attached to any place, I understood her bond to that one. My task was daunting.

I explained to Hillary that I could only stay a day or two. "The Germans are moving through the countryside like a fire out of control and even an American journalist risks a lot just being here."

"But this is Annecy," Hillary countered. "We're practically in Switzerland." I told her a couple of stories about French civilians shot on the border trying to get into Switzerland, but she only shook her head as if mourning the suffering of others who were a lot further away than one hundred kilometers northeast of where she sat. After thinking a few minutes about what I had said, she spoke.

"After all these years you have come to visit me at a dangerous time. Why?"

I was angry with myself for allowing the conversation to reach that critical juncture so soon and tried to think of a way to deflect it elsewhere. I needed time to gauge her mood, to find a weak point in the shell of her expatriate life. Hillary was staring very intently at me. I concluded that my only option was to bring up the subject I had traveled thousands of miles to discuss with her, listen as she rejected my plea, and then come back to it again and again if necessary. I drank half the glass of cool wine and smiled.

"Hillary, there are two facts I want you to accept. The first is that the Germans are going to become a bigger presence in this part of France very soon. The resistance is active here and the Swiss border is near. The second fact is that you are a wealthy American woman and America will enter the war. It's inevitable."

"You've been talking to father."

"No, I've been talking to politicians. Isolationism is going to be blown out of a cannon all the way to France."

"I see it's true what they say about your nice turns of phrase."

"Please, Hillary, take this seriously."

"Oh, I am, I assure you. I even thought about it myself." She got up and walked over to the edge of the terrace and looked at the lake. As if on cue a gunboat cruised by about a thousand yards out. "Their patrols are more frequent these last several weeks," she said woodenly. I was now beside her, and she turned to look up at me. "What is the worst that could happen?" she asked.

"If we don't join the war, the worst would be that they requisition your house and property for their own purposes. And Hillary . . . you're a beautiful woman . . ."

"I see." She turned back to the lake. "And if our country goes to war with Germany?"

"That and worse. They could put you in prison and use you, use your father, to some advantage. Or put you in one of their camps with the Jews and the gypsies and the other so-called political prisoners. Thousands are dying in those camps. Roosevelt is doing a superb job ignoring what's going on a few hundred miles from here." I was starting to talk politics and that was a tactical mistake with her. She never cared a damn about politics. I took her by the shoulders and squeezed gently. "I think if you stay you'll die or be hurt very badly. You have had enough hurt for one lifetime."

Hillary smiled at me, and I released her arms. "The last time you traveled to France to help me I didn't treat you very well, did I?"

I waved it away. "To you, I've always been one thing -- a boy who fell in love and couldn't let go."

"There could have been a time for us if I wasn't so determined to become a part

of something else."

"What something else, Hillary?" I asked.

"I have come to understand that it was *anything* else."

I left my internal reverie behind. "Anything other than what?" I asked. She took my hand and led me back to the table. The sun now illuminated the whole terrace and it was quite warm. I took off my jacket and sat down.

"I always thought I was special, and in many ways I think I was. But I wanted to establish my identity by rubbing the essence off talented people and putting it on like makeup. If I could be a part of Hem's life, he would become a part of what I was. To seduce Fitzgerald might make me magically appear as his next great heroine. It began, I think, with something Picasso drew for me. I seemed to touch him and he reciprocated by giving me a private view of his talent. . . and his pain. It made me greater than I was, you see."

I didn't understand what she was saying and it must have shown on my face. Hillary laughed. "I've been trying for ten years to articulate this to myself, so you must be patient while I try to find the words."

She folded her hands in front of her, as one does who is about to tell a story. "Imagine I am a moon circling a planet. I intervene between a sun and the planet and cast a deep shadow on it. Further along in my orbit, I am a luminescent presence in the planet's sky, not a source of light and growth and strength, but a faint nighttime presence which casts a soft glow over the landscape." She sat up straighter in her chair. "Then, in the blink of an eye, I circle another planet, casting more shadows, giving off more nocturnal illumination, and so on through the whole system of planets.

My purpose is defined. The fallacy of my strategy, you see, is that the moon is cold and dead. It only reflects light. Even the shadows it casts are only caused by its accidental position between a sun and a planet."

I wanted to talk, to say that she was more than she imagined, both to me and to people like Hemingway and Fitzgerald who took things from her and used them. I wanted her to know that there were many whose lives were touched by hers in a way most people could only hope for. I decided to risk arguing with her. "Your celestial metaphor is very lyrical but it isn't true. You are a sun. You give off light."

"Oh, I know that," she said dismissively. "I just never knew who I was. I kept trying to define myself as a part of someone else. Through him, or her, my worth would reveal itself." She smiled. "I wasn't going to be like mother, you see. People have told me she had real spirit when she was a young woman, before she met father. Then she became his vassal, his ornament, his vehicle for having children, and I suspect before she became ill she succeeded at being his housekeeper. I was worse than her." Hillary looked down at the hands folded in her lap. "She knew when my father went too far. But she was able to humble him with her unerring sense of the rightness of things. No matter that she did it with tears rather than a strong voice; she did it nonetheless. I did not succeed so well."

Hillary's eyes moistened and tears came. I reached out for her hand and she took it but looked hard at me and clenched her jaw. "Without intending to, I either used or was used. I never could simply *be*." The tears were finished. "That is, until I came here. I found me in this place and now you're trying to tell me I have to leave it because some German soldiers might take my house, or rape me, or send me to a concentration

camp?"

I told her yes.

"We'll see. I'm training a new horse. I lost one, you know." I reminded her she wrote me about it. "I can't just leave this one. Or any of this." Her arm swept an arc in front of her. I told her I understood. I did understand. I vowed not to bring up the issue of her escape from France until the next day or the day after.

We didn't have the luxury of so much time. That night Hillary came to my room to see that blankets and towels were all right and even allowed me to hold her. For the first time I felt her body against mine. I slept fitfully. The next morning we were on the terrace having bread and coffee when a car sounded in the drive and I went around the house to see who it was. Gerard introduced himself as he climbed out of an old, dilapidated truck, and asked where Hillary was, then followed me to the back of the house. He told her the countryside was overrun with German soldiers and a squad had come to his farm to ask him a lot of questions, and that some of the questions had to do with her. Hillary looked at me while he told her this, acknowledging with the look on her face both my foresight and her relationship with Gerard. Gerard told her she must go, that he would look after her house. She turned away from us and he walked up beside her and put his arm around her waist. I heard him tell her he would take her new Arabian back to his farm and keep him safe.

From that point forward everything happened too quickly to remember well. My packing took less time than hers so I went downstairs and helped Gerard close the shutters on the large windows at the back of the house, empty the coal box in the kitchen, and take everything out of the cupboards and icebox and put them in boxes

which we carried to his truck. It wasn't difficult to see what he was doing. He wanted Hillary's house to look as if no one lived there anymore, that the American woman had abandoned her home on the lake and gone back to America. When we had just about finished, Hillary came downstairs with two shiny suitcases and Gerard frowned at them. Hillary glanced down at either side of her, at the bags she packed, and looked up at him with a confused look on her face.

Put the suitcases in the back of my truck," he told me. "I have an old canvass bag that will hold most of her things. We can transfer from suitcase to bag en route."

My departure from Annecy was quite unlike my arrival. Only a day had passed but rifle shots were constant as we drove the mountain roads west out of Annecy. The shots were interspersed with automatic gunfire and mortar rounds. At one point, the sky in front of us lit up with a red incandescent light and Gerard explained to me that the Germans were searching for resistance fighters in the hills. After awhile the sounds of heavy artillery trailed off and the gunfire became sporadic as we drove further into the mountains, and by daybreak we were descending into a valley which leveled off in a patchwork of green and darker green squares for many miles before rising in the distance to the next mountain range. In the truck that night, I told Gerard I wanted to get to Paris, that it was the only point from which I knew I could get to Spain or Portugal. He admitted he could not help me beyond a certain nearby town where a farmer he knew could give us a place to spend the night. Of course I knew about Gerard from Hillary's letters and as I sat in the truck and watched his cigarette glow red against his face, I felt undeniable envy for the man. He was a simple farmer, a tender of horses. But he had been Hillary Malone's lover.

I doubted Gerard lived as simply as his friend Michael Bonneville. We stopped in the town of Amberieu for water for the truck's radiator and bread and cheese for us. I went into the small roadside market with Gerard. The middle aged couple who owned it stared at me suspiciously and I realized that although my clothing was casual, it was considerably more refined than anything worn by the people of Amberieu. I left the market while Gerard paid for the food. When he came back to the truck, he told me the place we were going was not far away, less than an hour's drive. Before starting out, he put a thick slice of cheese between two pieces of the bread and set the sandwich on his lap. The road out of Amberieu was busy with vehicles, but beyond the town everything was peaceful, as if no war was near. Only thirty minutes later Gerard slowed, turned left, and drove through a grove of apple trees on a narrow dirt road until he stopped at a small, white stucco farmhouse. Hillary had just fallen asleep against my shoulder. Reluctantly, I nudged her and she opened her eyes. She asked Gerard where we were.

"My friend Bonneville will keep you here today and tonight and in the morning take you to Lyon," he told her with emotion in his voice. "We have friends in Lyon but I would rather not compromise them. You should have no trouble taking the train to Paris without their help." Hillary looked at me, excused herself, and took Gerard by the arm to the other side of the truck and spoke to him. I asked her later what was said but she wouldn't tell me.

Michael Bonneville was much younger than Gerard. He greeted us at the door with his wife, Marie, and four children, all under the age of seven, who clung to their sides. I could not imagine where they all slept or, for that matter, what accommodations they had for Hillary and me. Once inside the house, Gerard did not linger. He spoke

briefly with Michael and Marie, embraced each of them, then Hillary, and walked across the small parlor to me. He extended his hand, which I grasped with heartfelt thanks.

"Take care of her." That was all he said. Then he walked out the door.

Hillary stared at him but said nothing. The Bonneville's looked at the floor, surely feeling as awkward and intrusive as I did witnessing the probable last moment Gerard would ever have with the woman he had loved.

When we first arrived at Bonneville's farm, I saw no vehicles of any kind, not even a tractor, so when he took us to a small barn behind the house I expected to see something inside that could transport us to Lyon. There was a lot of straw and rusted metal equipment hanging from hooks on the walls, but no automobile. In the farthest corner of the barn, under a high window, he showed us a bed which he said had been used more than once by people he had helped. Hillary looked up at me with a critical expression I considered unfair since I hadn't chosen the sleeping arrangements, and I raised my shoulders to indicate I too did not know what to do. Michael told us to rest and said he would come for us when dinner was ready. When he left, Hillary went over to the bed, pulled the cover back, and told me the sheets were newly laundered. As I busied myself with my duffel bag, she partially undressed and got into the bed, and when I stood up and turned around she was sitting up, resting on her elbows, smiling at me.

"I'll make a straw bed," I told her and turned away.

"Don't be ridiculous. Come here."

During the fifteen or so steps from where I stood to the edge of the bed, I imagined a number of scenarios but I shouldn't have bothered. As I pulled back the

cover and climbed into the bed, Hillary flopped onto her stomach with her head facing away from me, her left arm protruding, the palm outstretched. I reached over and clasped it. Her hand squeezed mine briefly and then was limp. She was asleep.

Unconsciousness came upon me just as suddenly. I dreamed I was walking down a rainswept Paris street looking up at house numbers, trying to find the same one that was written on a scrap of paper I held in the hand which grasped the handle of my umbrella. At the exact moment I saw the matching black numerals etched into the glass above a doorway, a man came out of that doorway and ran down the street, and a woman came out and called after him. The woman was Hillary. She looked up and down the street, shook her head, and started to close the door. I called up to her from the walk and started up the steps. As I reached the top step, the vestibule door slammed shut and the hall light inside the house went out.

Michael shook me. Opening my eyes I saw Hillary, dressed, over by the door to what was once a horse stall. She was looking very hard at me. I thanked Michael and got out of bed. He left the barn. "You were having quite a dream," Hillary said. "You woke me about half an hour ago with your moaning so I got up and dressed. Michael said his wife has made a special meal for us."

"What time is it?" I asked.

"About nine I think," she said. "I'll see you in the house." Hillary went to the double doors, pulled one open, and went outside. It was dark.

The afternoon and night in the barn in France were the closest Hillary and I ever got. After our meal we returned to the barn. Michael said he would meet us there at half past five the next morning. His friend who owned an automobile was coming

shortly after that and he wanted us to eat before we left. We had already slept, we were well fed, and we were more than a little frightened about the trip to Lyon and the uncertainty about boarding a Paris train with Germans all around, so we didn't get much more sleep that night. We lay awake under the blankets, watching our breath in the chill air, and talked until Michael came to wake us. I learned more about Hillary that night than I had learned from all our previous correspondence and conversations.

Everything went smoothly. Michael's friend came with a truck a little before six, we said goodbye to Michael and Marie, and started off for Lyon. The trip was three uneventful hours long. No Germans were visible until we neared Lyon. When we arrived in the city, we were dropped at the edge of town. Then we walked to the train station, bought tickets, and waited at a cafe across the street. Although there were German soldiers at the station and on the train, they didn't seem interested in us.

We arrived in Paris at midnight and I called a friend at whose home we could spend the night. We would take another train the next morning. I was feeling self-confident and happy. But as my spirits rose, Hillary's declined. That didn't surprise me. She had left her only true home, probably forever, said goodbye to a man for whom she obviously cared deeply, had the emotionally exhausting experience of reviewing her whole life with me the night before, was staying the night in a city that held many memories for her, and was about to embark on a long and tedious journey by train to Lisbon, followed by an equally long and tedious voyage on a clipper to New York. What awaited her in America was unknown and unknowable. When I tried to get Hillary to focus on the other end of the journey, she simply shook her head at me and asked that I change the subject. In my friend's house in Paris and on the train and ship, Hillary and I

had separate sleeping quarters and so when we were together, other people were always present. That prevented me from going back to revisit a dozen subjects she had talked about the night in Bonneville's barn about which I desperately wanted to learn more. During the three day trip to Lisbon we ate together and occasionally talked to people we met, but most of the time Hillary's activities were solitary -- reading, sleeping, staring endlessly out the window at the passing scenery. I never believed she was shutting me out, as she had before. She was only mourning her losses and girding herself for what lay ahead.

We docked in New York exactly two weeks after my departure for Annecy. In Lisbon I had wired my sister and asked her to welcome a house guest for an indeterminate stay. Hillary thought this rude and presumptuous, but she sent a wire to her branch of Credit Suisse giving my sister's address as the temporary one to which they should send money and documents. As the clipper sailed into New York harbor, the uppermost part of the skyline shrouded by low clouds and fog, I thought I detected some excitement in Hillary's voice and movements. I told her so.

"I'm anxious to see my mother. I haven't seen my father in eleven years but I haven't seen mother in nearly fifteen."

"It must be a little frightening to face that prospect."

"No, not really," she said. "Mother and I have remained close through our letters. If I had visited her it would only have made my absence worse, like a taunt."

"I'm glad your mother will have you close now."

"Not for long. This war won't last, especially if we get into it. Then I'll go back to my house. That is my happiness."

"And Gerard?" I asked.

"Oh, that's over. It was over long ago."

Two weeks later, Hillary went to Boston to visit her family. She decided to stay. I visited her there once, at an apartment she rented near the river. Despite her parents' insistence that she move back into their house, she told them she wouldn't even consider it. When we entered the war, I heard from a friend in Boston, whom I had asked to make inquiries about Hillary from time to time, that she was working in a factory that made something useful in the war effort. Later, I went to London to report on the war and soon lost track of Hillary. Although I wrote to her, she did not respond. After the armistice I had to stay behind for several months and write a series of articles about the liberation of the concentration camps. Then I was delayed in London for another month. When I returned to New York, I called Randolph Malone. He told me what I should have expected to hear. Hillary was gone. She had returned to France.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Hillary stayed in France another fifteen years. During that period in her life she became more social, integrating herself into the Annecy community, especially the artistic community. Despite this move away from her previously strict isolation, Hillary began to wonder if she was hanging on to Annecy just to hang on, and not because she continued to cherish it. Gerard married shortly after her return. The woman, who was about Hillary's age, lost her husband in the war and her parents were ill. She came to Annecy to care for them, met Gerard, and married him six months later. Old Dubois died in 1950. Hillary grieved his passing and missed his visits, which he had begun making again as soon as she returned.

Most important in her internal calculus was that no one kept in touch with her anymore. Hillary's egoistic belief in the special nature of her relationships with her old friends wouldn't permit her to understand that the maintenance of relationships is difficult enough when people are proximate, and nearly impossible when one party lives in a town far from places friends are likely to visit. Her male friends from the twenties were all married; even Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas had exchanged vows. Hillary nursed the belief she had been abandoned by everyone because of what had happened in Nice, yet apart from sporadic letters to Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Dos, and Gertrude Stein, she made no effort at all to reinvigorate her relationships with those people.

When Hillary's mother died, she sold her house and moved back to Boston to take care of her father. I didn't hear from her for almost a year after her repatriation and, in fact, didn't know she was back in the States. Her letter was most welcome.

July 7, 1961

Dear _____:

Two days ago they buried my friend Hemingway. It is very hard to describe how that feels, but even harder to try to explain my emotions about the way he did it. He returned from dinner at a restaurant, went upstairs to his room, put two shells into the shotgun, placed the butt of the gun against the floor, and blew the entire top half of his head against the ceiling of the room. My friend Hem. I never imagined he'd be a suicide like his father. I knew two things about him few people knew -- he was preoccupied with death and he was inherently bisexual. I thought he was preoccupied with death because he feared it, not because he feared embracing it.

Ernest Hemingway antagonized a lot of people. His publishers, his writer friends, his recreational cohorts. I think I understood him the way he understood himself. He was not a great writer. Hem was as aware as anyone of the way fact and myth converge to create something larger than what is really there. I believe his boyish bloodlust created an image he knew the docile reading public would spoon into their mouths like sugar candy. He was always aware what others thought; despite all his disdain for popular opinion, he ultimately was a creature of it. And he understood how to use it.

His life was a fiction and he understood that. So did his wives. The smarter ones soon realized that the price to be paid for being at the side of such a man was that they were but characters in his fictional life. The lions in Africa played that role, the bartenders in Havana did also, and Hem's wives had the greatest role to play. Among his tortures was that only Hadley truly loved him. And he ditched her quick when someone came along who made clear she would not leave the table until she was full. I did not communicate with him often after 1932 but I doubt things changed much. After he married Martha Gelhorn, I didn't hear from him at all.

I am still haunted by Katy's death and have corresponded with Dos a number of times since she died. His new marriage seems good for him and I am glad. I must tell you, however, that what happened to Scott stays with me most. In private he was lackluster and insecure but in public he personified our generation. The career in Hollywood and the affair with that woman cheapened him so horribly that I cannot bear to think about it.

I am not old but I am sick. I live in my parents' house as one lives

inside a relic from the past. The mayor calls on me and inquires into my health. The mother of the man who will be our president called me the other day to ask how I was feeling. Temporal and serious people have replaced those of us who once knew how to live. I am so saddened by all that has happened. I think a lot about Biscuit, my last horse. How brazen he was. Before I left Annecy I would go out to the pasture early in the morning and call him. He would come running out of the early dawn mist, nuzzle me with his nose, and wait for my command. I rode him bareback, you know, and he loved it as much as I did. When he went very fast and sensed I was unsteadily seated on his back he would slow down until he was confident I was on tight again, and then gallop off faster than before. I wish I had known a man like that.

This shit probably bores you. I'll go back to my porch and leave you to all those women who must fawn all over you, like . . .

Love,

Hillary

One month later, on August 7, 1961, Hillary wrote her last letter to me. It was brief.

Dear _____:

The doctor just called and told me to stay quiet. It seems that for such a young older woman I have a serious problem, an embolism in a lung. The doctor is a handsome young man in his forties. I asked him if he wanted to fuck. He declined.

It is so hard to lose everyone you love, except for the two bad men who twisted my life. You were the best friend I had because you always loved me the way I wished I could love another person. I had a dream last night about the time Sophie visited me in Paris. Remember, I told you about it on the train.

Love,

Hill

"Oh Sophie, why do you have to be such a bitch?" Hillary laughed at her friend and walked over to the window. She hoped it didn't sound like anything more than the

kind of banter friends share with one another.

"I'm not a bitch," Sophie said emphatically. "I'm also not a prude. But it is one thing to treat men as equals and quite another to reduce yourself to the primitive level of their carnal appetites." Sophie got up and poured each of them a glass of wine.

"Do you really think that's what it is to take a lover without loving him?" Hillary asked.

"Of course it is. That is what all men want, sex without love."

"Some of the time."

"All right, some of the time. But enough of the time to . . ."

"Why should we be different, you and me, Sophie? I don't understand why we have to be different. Don't you feel that need sometimes? I know I do. Are we just supposed to sit quietly in the park, wait for them to ask us properly to some acceptable social function, go for long walks for a month, let them kiss and maul us a little in the parlor, and then walk to the altar a year later with a total stranger?"

"It doesn't have to be that way," Sophie said resentfully.

"Well then, why not take a chapter out of their book? Why not live a little the way they do?"

"I can't believe you're talking this way. I came all this way to see you and what happens? I go to my room one night and you slink to the door and let a man inside, take him to your room and have sex with him. Honestly, Hillary, you don't know proper limits."

"It would have been all right if you weren't here? Is that what you're saying?"

"That is not what I'm saying." Sophie sat on the sofa and pulled her knees up to

her chest under the dressing gown, the way children do when they're scared. Hillary noticed the pose and came over and sat down next to her.

"Do you really mean it that you are leaving tomorrow?" she asked.

"Yes I do. I always admired your independence, Hillary, your unwillingness to conform. But what you did last night shows no respect for me at all."

Hillary put her head in Sophie's lap and stretched out on the sofa, looking up at her. "I do respect you. I'm not trying to show disrespect, nor am I trying to prove anything to you. I'm only trying to prove something to myself."

"What on earth would that be?" Sophie asked as she stroked the auburn curls around Hillary's ear.

"Something great is going on all around us here. I'm not good enough to be great, Sophie, I know that much. But I can be in the middle of it."

"Hillary, you're talking rubbish! You should hear yourself."

"Oh, I do."

"You don't have to be here to fulfill yourself. Things at home are changing a lot. It isn't just that we can vote. Women are beginning to do things, meaningful things. What you describe is not going forward, it's going backward."

"Really? You should meet Gertrude Stein. Or Sylvia Beach."

"They're sleeping casually with important men?"

Hillary laughed. "No, I assure you they aren't doing that."

"Then what do you admire so much?"

Hillary didn't answer Sophie's question. She kissed her, yawned, and said they would continue the argument the next day.

They never did. Sophie left Paris for a time and left Hillary forever.

A few days after I received Hillary's last letter Randolph called. Although he was eighty-seven years old he didn't sound any different from the man I remembered. His voice was strong and resentful. This time, however, it had a frailty unrelated to age. When he told me Hillary died in her sleep at Massachusetts General, where she was taken almost a week before, his voice quavered with emotion. The last thing he said before insisting that I come and help bury her was that he wanted me to give her eulogy. I didn't want to but he didn't give me the opportunity to decline.

There weren't many people at Hillary's memorial service. Most of her contemporaries were already dead, which seems inconsistent with her relative youth at the time she died. About two dozen of us, many virtual strangers to Hillary, stood under rain splattered umbrellas on a hill overlooking a garden. The black lacquered coffin sat on the ghastly rollers which soon would lower her into a freshly dug hole. The pile of dirt was covered with a carpet of artificially green artificial grass. I got up from my folding chair, stood before the dozen or so mourners, and said the words that put Hillary Malone to rest forever.

Epilogue

I have thought for almost forty years about the meaning of Hillary Malone's life. Hillary was among the first modern women of our century. Like many who are first, she reached that distinction by making many mistakes, some grievous. Nothing was particularly noteworthy during her upbringing. She was born of the union of a mother who was a brahmin, one of the most influential protestants in Boston, and of a father who was the grandson of an Irish immigrant who hated the wealthy protestants whom his sweaty labors served. She was spoiled by her parents, surely, and they provided her with the benefit of their money and their values. At an early age she began to write poetry and, although only one of her poems survived her death, its quality, combined with the reactions of people such as Gertrude Stein and Eugene Jolas to numerous other samples of her verse, suggest she had an extraordinary talent. When she left America, however, she left her writing behind. Yet what the expatriates saw of it convinced them she was one of them, an artist. She was not one of them in another sense, however -- they went to Paris with a purpose and needed a place to nurture it; Hillary went to that place to find her purpose. I think about a passage from *Tender is the Night*, one of the great novels written by Hillary's friend, F. Scott Fitzgerald:

But whereas a girl of nineteen draws her confidence from a surfeit of attention, a woman of twenty-nine is nourished on subtler stuff. Desirous, she chooses her aperitifs wisely, or, content, she enjoys the caviar of potential power. Happily she does not seem, in either case, to anticipate the subsequent years when her insight will often be blurred by panic, by the fear of stopping or the fear of going on. But on the landings of nineteen or twenty-nine she is pretty sure that there are no bears in the hall.

Like the woman Nicole about whom Fitzgerald wrote this, Hillary Malone stood on a landing at the age of twenty-nine and feared no bears in the hall, but of course there

were many. She embraced one of them. Allen MacDermitt was one of those people who, by all appearances, leads a normal life, who loves children and the smell of fresh cut flowers, who can be selfless, and who can love a woman. But while he may have bent down to appreciate the scent of roses in a vase, at night he twisted the stems, tore the flowers from them, and crushed them under his feet. Hillary thought he was powerful, unusual, gifted, the man who would allow her to enjoy "the caviar of potential power." She was wrong. His dark musings caused him to enlist her in gruesome experiments in what he described as the erotic possibilities between men and women. He also knew when Hillary might permit his Mr. Hyde to emerge, intuitively exploiting Hillary's desire for the unconventional at times she was unsure of herself or, worse, becoming vile at those moments she felt lonely for the men and women who had become so important to her.

We know the result of MacDermitt's twisted conquest of Hillary's trust. In many ways he ended her life one night out on the Mediterranean sea just as surely as he ended his own.

I cannot allow myself to dwell on the final Nice chapter of her life any more than I could choose to ignore it. It is necessary to explain her disappearance from the world of normal human commerce, but it need not set the tone for evaluating her life's richness.

The Hemingway mystique is important to an understanding of Hillary's attitude toward men and relationships and love. I do not know the degree to which Hillary's attitudes may have influenced Hemingway's, but I am certain that his had impact on Hillary. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan reflects the Hemingway attitude:

And another thing. Don't ever kid yourself about loving some one. It is

just that most people are not lucky enough ever to have it. You never had it before and now you have it. What you have with Maria, whether it lasts just through today and a part of tomorrow, or whether it lasts for a long life is the most important thing that can happen to a human being. There will always be people who say it does not exist because they cannot have it. But I tell you it is true and that you have it and that you are lucky even if you die tomorrow.

For Hillary there was certainty she could not have it, just as clearly as there were countless opportunities to find it. She simply believed it did not exist. I believe it hurt her deeply to see her friend Hemingway misconstrue his own words, for she thought he lived his life believing he could only find happiness with women for relatively short periods of time, "today and a part of tomorrow." Hemingway told Hillary once that he really had no control over the situation in which he found himself with Pauline, that he never stopped loving Hadley, but that he just had to have Pauline. Circumstances dictated his choice. At one point Hillary postulated that Hemingway simply got bored with people, including his wives; at another she surmised that the writer had to escape from relationships that threatened to make him dull and dependent on routine for his happiness. Ultimately, she concluded from her own experience with him that he was afraid to drop barriers that would have offered a glimpse into his soul.

Hillary's relationship with Hemingway was pivotal during her Paris years, and inexplicable. Early on she was intimate with a painter whose essence she felt she had touched after only a short time. This made her heady with the belief she had a talent for burrowing in close to the core of artistic genius and actually affecting the energy and motivations of the object of her attention. She desperately wanted to have such a symbiotic relationship with Hemingway but he would not participate. At least not the way she wanted him to. Never was Hillary's excitement greater than when Hemingway

talked about his work, and never was their relationship with each other less intimate than at those times. Hillary sought him out or conspired with coincidence during his most solitary moments and often stimulated him to admit his pain, but she was never able to act as a catalyst or bridge between that pain and its obvious manifestation in his art. The role was performed elsewhere, if at all. She even tried to join his merry band of revelers in Spain, but when Hemingway tried to take advantage of an opportunity to achieve intimacy with her she spurned his approach and allowed her feelings to be hurt. Many years later she figured out why she did that -- subconsciously she believed it would make him feel guilty and therefore could lead in only one of two directions, marriage or complete rejection.

The other single most important relationship Hillary developed in Paris was with Gertrude Stein. (I do not include Fitzgerald at this point because his friendship with Hillary really began in the south of France.) Stein had a remarkable fondness for Hillary and allowed herself to express it even in the presence of Alice Toklas. Hillary was able to disarm Toklas' potential jealousy as effectively as she did with the wives of men who were fond of her, and given her beauty and sensual quality I am not sure how she was able to do this, but the record is clear and there appear to be no exceptions that would help explain it. Stein is most important, however, for introducing Hillary to the world of art, which began as a study and quickly became an active pursuit. She loved Stein's collection and met many artists and art dealers at Stein's Saturday salons to whose attendance Hillary was slavishly devoted. Hillary met Pablo Picasso at Gertrude Stein's apartment years before she began her own serious interest in painting, and I find it remarkable that as much as Hillary's life was devoted to causing the essence of others

to rub off on her, she did not imitate Picasso or any other artist she met in those early years. But Stein was more important to Hillary than by merely serving as the person who introduced her to the art world. Her principal contribution to Hillary's life was to be a simple, unadorned friend, someone Hillary always felt comfortable talking to and confiding in. Her walks with Stein in the Luxembourg Gardens were among the most peaceful and reassuring moments in her young life in Paris, and Stein found them equally comforting.

Dos Passos is harder to explain. He adored Hillary, yet he defied his emotions and his own nature by letting go of any meaningful contact with her after about 1927. I think she lives in his literature. For instance, when I first read *42nd Parallel*, the first book of his trilogy *U.S.A.*, I thought I detected a tension during a scene between a man and woman Hillary might have described to him:

He put his hand on her knee. She could feel him looking at her in the dark. He leaned over and kissed her very gently. She liked his lips gentle against hers that way. She was kissing them. She was falling through centuries of swampy night. His hot chest was against her breasts bearing down. She would cling to him bearing her down through centuries of swampy night. Then all at once in a cold spasm she felt sick, choking for breath like drowning. She began to fight him. She got her leg up and pushed him hard in the groin with her knee.

He let go of her and got out of the car. She could hear him walking up and down the road in the dark behind her. She was trembling and scared and sick. After a while he got in, switched on the light and drove on without looking at her. He was smoking a cigarette and little sparks came from it as he drove.

This scene convinces me Hillary told Dos Passos, probably in Pamplona or during one of the few evenings they had together in Paris, about an event that occurred in her youth which she shared with very few people. I suspect she did so because she

believed Dos was the gentlest and most sensitive of all the writers and artists she met. That secret, however, was buried with her along with many, many others.

Hillary was a part of the "lost generation," the label Gertrude Stein hung on all the men and women she met in Paris during the twenties and thirties who were lost only in the sense that they could not accomplish what they wanted to in America, and who came to France to be "lost" there. Stein's sobriquet was typically terse and dramatic, but it was also fallacious and, in a sense, cruel. We forget about American culture immediately after the first world war. There was none. America was hell-bent on elevating commercial life to a level never seen before in western civilization. Yes, there were jazz dens in New York and New Orleans, whites mingling with colored people and experimenting with music and drugs. But there was no American culture of the type that elevates painting and literature to a level of respect, that nurtures it in the womb. At that time, culture was a European preserve. Hillary didn't go to Paris and stay there because she knew this. She stayed in Paris because after a quite brief relationship with the city, the continent, and all of the people flocking to it, Hillary knew something wonderful was happening, something that would never be repeated during her lifetime, and indeed something which has not existed since.

No one gave Hillary a road map. It wasn't necessary. She knew where she was, and she espied the people whom she knew would make a difference. To her enormous credit, Hillary Malone unwittingly intervened in the lives of several people who changed the face of art and literature in our time. She didn't know exactly what she was there to do, but she followed her instincts and was among them.

Hillary was destroyed by her belief that "today and maybe one day more" can

give a life all the meaning and pleasure and purpose a single life requires. I believe she had a plan -- to marry a man whose wealth and proclivities for the arts, combined with her instincts and relationships, would enhance art and literature in the twentieth century in a way that far surpassed the Victorian patronage system. From the inside of the circle she saw her potential sized to her own limitations. Outside the circle, however, Hillary Malone could powerfully affect those within it. That was her plan. It failed.

I loved Hillary Malone for nearly forty years. I never married because I knew that one day she might wake to the realization that the best lives are those lived by normal people doing the best they can to keep up one end of the human bargain, striving to improve the future with their labor and their progeny. She might see this, remember my unselfish love, and call me to the altar. I don't regret my foolish wait. Hillary Malone was one for whom no love, no effort, no sacrifice could ever be vainglorious. She was of the angels.